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MR. BROWN'S

LETTERS.

MR. BROWN'S

Letters

TO A YOUNG MAN ABOUT TOWN,

BY

William Makepeace Thackeray

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1901.

Publishers' Note.

The Letters here printed for the first time as a single volume are included in Thackeray's "Sketches in London," and originally appeared in Punch *during the year 1849.*

As an independent series of Essays written under a nom de plume *not elsewhere adopted by Thackeray, they possess an individuality of their own: they were characterized by James Hannay as being "inimitable, wise, easy, playful, worldly social sketches of Thackeray," and seem to deserve the distinction of special publication.*

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MR. BROWN'S

Letters

TO A YOUNG MAN ABOUT TOWN.

I

IT is with the greatest satisfaction, my dear Robert, that I have you as a neighbor, within a couple of miles of me, and that I have seen you established comfortably in your chambers in Fig-Tree Court. The situation is not cheerful, it is true; and to clamber up three pairs of black creaking stairs is an exercise not pleasant to a man who never cared for ascending mountains. Nor did the performance of the young barrister who lives under you — and, it appears, plays pretty constantly upon the French horn — give me any great pleasure as I sat and partook of luncheon in your rooms. Your female attendant or laundress, too, struck me from her personal appearance to be a lady addicted to the use

of ardent spirits; and the smell of tobacco, of which you say some old college friends of yours had partaken on the night previous, was, I must say, not pleasant in the chambers, and I even thought might be remarked as lingering in your own morning-coat. However, I am an old fellow. The use of cigars has come in since my time (and, I must own, is adopted by many people of the first fashion), and these and other inconveniences are surmounted more gayly by young fellows like yourself than by oldsters of my standing. It pleased me, however, to see the picture of the old house at home over the mantelpiece. Your college prize-books made a very good show in your bookcases; and I was glad to remark in the looking-glass the cards of both our excellent county Members. The rooms, altogether, have a reputable appearance; and I hope, my dear fellow, that the Society of the Inner Temple will have a punctual tenant.

As you have now completed your academical studies, and are about to commence your career in London, I propose, my dear Nephew, to give you a few hints for your guidance; which, although you have an undoubted genius of your own, yet come from a person who has had considerable personal experience, and, I have no doubt, would be useful to you if you did not disregard them, as, indeed, you will most probably do.

With your law studies it is not my duty to meddle. I have seen you established, one of six pupils, in Mr. Tapeworm's chambers in Pump Court, seated on a high-legged stool on a foggy day, with your back to a blazing fire. At your father's desire, I have paid a hundred guineas to that eminent special pleader, for the advantages which I have no doubt you will enjoy, while seated on the high-legged stool in his back room, and rest contented with your mother's prediction that you will be Lord Chief Justice some day. May you

prosper, my dear fellow! is all I desire. By the way, I should like to know what was the meaning of a pot of porter which entered into your chambers as I issued from them at one o'clock, and trust that it was not *your* thirst which was to be quenched with such a beverage at such an hour.

It is not, then, with regard to your duties as a law-student that I have a desire to lecture you, but in respect of your pleasures, amusements, acquaintances, and general conduct and bearing as a young man of the world.

I will rush into the subject at once, and exemplify my morality in your own person. Why, sir, for instance, do you wear that tuft to your chin, and those sham turquoise buttons to your waistcoat? A chin-tuft is a cheap enjoyment certainly, and the twiddling it about, as I see you do constantly, so as to show your lower teeth, a harmless amusement to fill up your vacuous hours. And as for

waistcoat-buttons, you will say, "Do not all the young men wear them, and what can I do but buy artificial turquoise, as I cannot afford to buy real stones?"

I take you up at once and show you why you ought to shave off your tip and give up the factitious jewelry. My dear Bob, in spite of us and all the Republicans in the world, there are ranks and degrees in life and society, and distinctions to be maintained by each man according to his rank and degree. You have no more right, as I take it, to sport an imperial on your chin than I have to wear a shovel-hat with a rosette. I hold a tuft to a man's chin to be the centre of a system, so to speak, which ought all to correspond and be harmonious — the whole tune of a man's life ought to be played in that key.

Look, for instance, at Lord Hugo Fitzsurse seated in the private box at the Lyceum, by the side of that beautiful creature with the black eyes and the magnificent point-lace, who

you fancied was ogling you through her enormous spy-glasses. Lord Hugo has a tuft to his chin, certainly, his countenance grins with a perfect vacuity behind it, and his whiskers curl crisply round one of the handsomest and stupidest countenances in the world.

But just reckon up in your own mind what it costs him to keep up that simple ornament on his chin. Look at every article of that amiable and most gentlemanlike — though, I own, foolish — young man's dress, and see how absurd it is of you to attempt to imitate him. Look at his hands (I have the young nobleman perfectly before my mind's eye now); the little hands are dangling over the cushion of the box, gloved as tightly and delicately as a lady's. His wristbands are fastened up towards his elbows with jewelry. Gems and rubies meander down his pink shirt-front and waistcoat. He wears a watch with an apparatus of gimcracks at his waistcoat-pocket. He sits in a splendid side-box, or he

simpers out of the windows at "White's," or you see him grinning out of a cab by the Serpentine — a lovely and costly picture surrounded by a costly frame.

Whereas you and I, my good Bob, if we want to see a play, do not disdain an order from our friend the newspaper Editor, or to take a seat in the pit. Your watch is your father's old hunting-watch. When we go in the Park we go on foot, or at best get a horse up after Easter, and just show in Rotten Row. *We* shall never look out of "White's" bow-window. The amount of Lord Hugo's tailor's bill would support you and your younger brother. His valet has as good an allowance as you, besides his perquisites of old clothes. You cannot afford to wear a dandy lord's cast-off old clothes, neither to imitate those which he wears.

There is nothing disagreeable to me in the notion of a dandy any more than there is in the idea of a peacock, or a camelopard, or a

prodigious gaudy tulip, or an astonishingly bright brocade. There are all sorts of animals, plants, and stuffs in Nature, from peacocks to tomtits, and from cloth-of-gold to corduroy, whereof the variety is assuredly intended by Nature, and certainly adds to the zest of life. Therefore, I do not say that Lord Hugo is a useless being, or bestow the least contempt upon him. Nay, it is right gratifying and natural that he should be, and be as he is — handsome and graceful, splendid and perfumed, beautiful — whiskered and empty-headed, a sumptuous dandy and man of fashion — and what you young men have denominated "A Swell."

But a cheap Swell, my dear Robert (and that little chin ornament as well as certain other indications which I have remarked in your simple nature lead me to insist upon this matter rather strongly with you), is by no means a pleasing object for our observation, although he is presented to us so frequently.

Try, my boy, and curb any little propensity which you may have to dresses that are too splendid for your station. You do not want light kid-gloves and wristbands up to your elbows, copying out Mr. Tapeworm's Pleas and Declarations; you will only blot them with lawyer's ink over your desk, and they will impede your writing; whereas Lord Hugo may decorate his hands in any way he likes, because he has little else to do with them but to drive cabs, or applaud dancing-girls' pirouettes, or to handle a knife and fork or a toothpick as becomes the position in life which he fills in so distinguished a manner. To be sure, since the days of friend Æsop, Jackdaws have been held up to ridicule for wearing the plumes of birds to whom Nature has affixed more gaudy tails; but as Folly is constantly reproducing itself, so must Satire, and our honest *Mr. Punch* has but to repeat to the men of our generation the lessons taught by the good-natured Hunchback his predecessor.

Shave off your tuft, then, my boy, and send it to the girl of your heart as a token, if you like: and I pray you abolish the jewelry, towards which I clearly see you have a propensity. As you have a plain dinner at home, served comfortably on a clean tablecloth, and not a grand service of half a dozen *entrées*, such as we get at our county Member's (and an uncommonly good dinner it is too), so let your dress be perfectly neat, polite, and cleanly, without any attempts at splendor. Magnificence is the decency of the rich — but it cannot be purchased with half a guinea a day, which, when the rent of your chambers is paid, I take to be pretty nearly the amount of your worship's income. This point I thought was rather well illustrated the other day, in an otherwise silly and sentimental book which I looked over at the Club, called the "Foggarty Diamond" (or some such vulgar name). Somebody gives the hero, who is a poor fellow, a diamond pin: he is obliged to buy a

new stock to set off the diamond, then a new waistcoat, to correspond with the stock, then a new coat, because the old one is too shabby for the rest of his attire; — finally, the poor devil is ruined by the diamond ornament, which he is forced to sell, as I would recommend you to sell your waistcoat studs, were they worth anything.

But as you have a good figure and a gentlemanlike deportment, and as every young man likes to be well attired, and ought, for the sake of his own advantage and progress in life, to show himself to the best advantage, I shall take an early opportunity of addressing you on the subject of tailors and clothes, which at least merit a letter to themselves.

II

On Tailoring — and Toilets in General.

OUR ancestors, my dear Bob, have transmitted to you (as well as every member of our family) considerable charms of person and figure, of which fact, although you are of course perfectly aware, yet, and equally of course, you have no objection to be reminded; and with these facial and corporeal endowments, a few words respecting dress and tailoring may not be out of place; for nothing is trivial in life, and everything to the philosopher has a meaning. As in the old joke about a pudding which has two sides, namely an inside and an outside, so a coat or a hat has its inside as well as its outside; I mean, that there is in a man's exterior appearance the consequence of his inward ways of thought,

and a gentleman who dresses too grandly, or too absurdly, or too shabbily, has some oddity, or insanity, or meanness in his mind, which develops itself somehow outwardly in the fashion of his garments.

No man has a right to despise his dress in this world. There is no use in flinging any honest chance whatever away. For instance, although a woman cannot be expected to know the particulars of a gentleman's dress, any more than we to be acquainted with the precise nomenclature or proper cut of the various articles which those dear creatures wear, yet to what lady in a society of strangers do we feel ourselves most naturally inclined to address ourselves? — to her or those whose appearance pleases us; not to the gaudy, overdressed Dowager or Miss — nor to her whose clothes, though handsome, are put on in a slatternly manner, but to the person who looks neat and trim and elegant, and in whose person we fancy we see exhibited indications of a

natural taste, order, and propriety. If Miss Smith in a rumpled gown offends our eyesight, though we hear she is a young lady of great genius and considerable fortune, while Miss Jones in her trim and simple attire attracts our admiration; so must women, on their side, be attracted or repelled by the appearance of gentlemen into whose company they fall. If you are a tiger in appearance, you may naturally expect to frighten a delicate and timid female; if you are a sloven, to offend her: and as to be well with women constitutes one of the chiefest happinesses of life, the object of my worthy Bob's special attention will naturally be to neglect no precautions to win their favor.

Yes: a good face, a good address, a good dress, are each so many points in the game of life, of which every man of sense will avail himself. They help many a man more in his commerce with society than learning or genius. It is hard often to bring the former into a

drawing-room: it is often too lumbering and unwieldy for any den but its own. And as a King Charles's spaniel can snooze before the fire, or frisk over the ottoman-cushions and on to the ladies' laps, when a Royal elephant would find a considerable difficulty in walking up the stairs, and subsequently in finding a seat; so a good manner and appearance will introduce you into many a house, where you might knock in vain for admission, with all the learning of Porson in your trunk.

It is not learning, it is not virtue, about which people inquire in society. It is manners. It no more profits me that my neighbor at table can construe Sanscrit and say the "Encyclopædia" by heart, than that he should possess half a million in the bank (unless, indeed, he gives dinners; when, for reasons obvious, one's estimation of him, or one's desire to please him, takes its rise in different sources), or that the lady whom I hand down to dinner should be as virtuous as Cornelia or

the late Mrs. Hannah More. What is wanted for the nonce is that folks should be as agreeable as possible in conversation and demeanor; so that good humor may be said to be one of the very best articles of dress one can wear in society; the which to see exhibited in Lady X.'s honest face, let us say, is more pleasant to behold in a room than the glitter of Lady Z.'s best diamonds. And yet, in point of virtue, the latter is, no doubt, a perfect dragon. But virtue is a home quality: manners are the coat it wears when it goes abroad.

Thus, then, my beloved Bob, I would have your dining-out suit handsome, neat, well-made, fitting you naturally and easily, and yet with a certain air of holiday about it, which should mark its destination. It is not because they thought their appearance was much improved by the ornament, that the ancient philosophers and topers decorated their old pates with flowers (no wreath, I know, would make some people's mugs beautiful;

and I confess, for my part, I would as lief wear a horse-collar or a cotton nightcap in society as a coronet of polyanthuses or a garland of hyacinths): — it is not because a philosopher cares about dress that he wears it; but he wears his best as a sign of a feast, as a bush is the sign of an inn. You ought to mark a festival as a red-letter day, and you put on your broad and spotless white waistcoat, your finest linen, your shiniest boots, as much as to say, "It is a feast; here I am, clean, smart, ready with a good appetite, determined to enjoy."

You would not enjoy a feast if you came to it unshorn, in a draggle-tailed dressing-gown. You ought to be well dressed, and suitable to it. A very odd and wise man whom I once knew, and who had not (as far as one could outwardly judge) the least vanity about his personal appearance, used, I remember, to make a point of wearing in large Assemblies a most splendid gold or crimson waistcoat.

He seemed to consider himself in the light of a walking bouquet of flowers, or a movable chandelier. His waistcoat was a piece of furniture to decorate the rooms; as for any personal pride he took in the adornment, he had none: for the matter of that, he would have taken the garment off, and lent it to a waiter, — but this Philosopher's maxim was, that dress should be handsome upon handsome occasions, — and I hope you will exhibit your own taste upon such. You don't suppose that people who entertain you so hospitably have four-and-twenty lights in the dining-room, and still and dry champagne every day? — or that my friend Mrs. Perkins puts her drawing-room door under her bed every night, when there is no ball? A young fellow must dress himself, as the host and hostess dress themselves, in an extra manner for extra nights. Enjoy, my boy, in honesty and manliness, the goods of this life. I would no more have you refuse to take your glass of wine, or to admire

(always in honesty) a pretty girl, than dislike the smell of a rose, or turn away your eyes from a landscape. "*Neque tu choreas sperne, puer*," as the dear old Heathen says: and, in order to dance, you must have proper pumps willing to spring and whirl lightly, and a clean pair of gloves, with which you can take your partner's pretty little hand.

As for particularizing your dress, that were a task quite absurd and impertinent, considering that you are to wear it, and not I, and remembering the variations of fashion. When I was presented to H. R. H. the Prince Regent, in the uniform of the Hammersmith Hussars, viz., a yellow jacket, pink pantaloons, and silver lace, green morocco boots, and a light blue pelisse lined with ermine, the august Prince himself, the model of grace and elegance in his time, wore a coat of which the waist-buttons were placed between his royal shoulder-blades, and which, if worn by a man now, would cause the boys to hoot him in Pall Mall, and be a

uniform for Bedlam. If buttons continue their present downward progress, a man's waist may fall down to his heels next year, or work upwards to the nape of his neck after another revolution: who knows? Be it yours decently to conform to the custom, and leave your buttons in the hands of a good tailor, who will place them wherever fashion ordains. A few general rules, however, may be gently hinted to a young fellow who has perhaps a propensity to fall into certain errors.

Eschew violent sporting-dresses, such as one sees but too often in the parks and public places on the backs of misguided young men. There is no objection to a hostler wearing a particular costume, but it is a pity that a gentleman should imitate it. I have seen in like manner young fellows at Cowes attired like the pictures we have of smugglers, buccaneers, and mariners, in Adelphi melodramas. I would like my Bob to remember that his business in life is neither to handle a currycomb

nor a marlinspike, and to fashion his habit accordingly.

If your hair or clothes do not smell of tobacco, as they sometimes, it must be confessed, do, you will not be less popular among ladies. And as no man is worth a fig, or can have real benevolence of character, or observe mankind properly, who does not like the society of modest and well-bred women, respect their prejudices in this matter, and if you must smoke, smoke in an old coat, and away from the ladies.

Avoid dressing-gowns; which argue dawdling, an unshorn chin, a lax toilet, and a general lazy and indolent habit at home. Begin your day with a clean conscience in every way. Cleanliness is honesty.[1] A man who shows but

[1] *Note to the beloved reader.* — This hint, dear Sir, is of course not intended to apply personally to *you*, who are scrupulously neat in your person; but when you look around you and see how many people neglect the use of that admirable cosmetic, cold water, you will see that a few words in its praise may be spoken with advantage.

a clean face and hands is a rogue and hypocrite in society, and takes credit for a virtue he does not possess. And of all the advances toward civilization which our nation has made, and of most of which Mr. Macaulay treats so eloquently in his lately published History, as in his lecture to the Glasgow Students the other day, there is none which ought to give a philanthropist more pleasure than to remark the great and increasing demand for bath-tubs at the ironmongers': Zinc-Institutions, of which our ancestors had a lamentable ignorance.

And I hope that these institutions will be universal in our country before long, and that every decent man in England will be a Companion of the Most Honorable order of the Bath.

III

The Influence of Lovely Woman upon Society.

CONSTANTLY, my dear Bob, I have told you how refining is the influence of women upon society, and how profound our respect ought to be for them. Living in chambers as you do, my dear Nephew, and not of course liable to be amused by the constant society of an old uncle, who moreover might be deucedly bored with your own conversation — I beseech and implore you to make a point of being intimate with one or two families where you can see kind and well-bred English ladies. I have seen women of all nations in the world, but I never saw the equals of English women (meaning of course to include our cousins the MacWhirters of

Glasgow, and the O'Tooles of Cork): and I pray sincerely, my boy, that you may always have a woman for a friend.

Try, then, and make yourself the *bienvenu* in some house where accomplished and amiable ladies are. Pass as much of your time as you can with them. Lose no opportunity of making yourself agreeable to them: run their errands; send them flowers and elegant little tokens; show a willingness to be pleased by their attentions, and to aid their little charming schemes of shopping, or dancing, or this, or that. I say to you, make yourself a lady's man as much as ever you can.

It is better for you to pass an evening once or twice a week in a lady's drawing-room, even though the conversation is rather slow and you know the girls' songs by heart, than in a club, tavern, or smoking-room, or a pit of a theatre. All amusements of youth to which virtuous women are not admitted are, rely on it, deleterious in their nature. All men who

avoid female society have dull perceptions and are stupid, or have gross tastes and revolt against what is pure. Your Clubswaggerers who are sucking the butts of billiard-cues all night call female society insipid. Sir, poetry is insipid to a yokel; beauty has no charms for a blind man; music does not please an unfortunate brute who does not know one tune from another — and, as a true epicure is hardly ever tired of water-souchy and brown bread and butter, I protest I can sit for a whole night talking to a well-regulated kindly woman about her girl coming out, or her boy at Eton, and like the evening's entertainment.

One of the great benefits a young man may derive from women's society is, that he is bound to be respectful to them. The habit is of great good to your moral man, depend on it. Our education makes of us the most eminently selfish men in the world. We fight for ourselves, we push for ourselves; we cut the best slices out of the joint at club-dinners

for ourselves; we yawn for ourselves and light our pipes, and say we won't go out: we prefer ourselves and our ease — and the greatest good that comes to a man from woman's society is, that he is to think of somebody besides himself — somebody to whom he is bound to be constantly attentive and respectful. Certainly I don't want my dear Bob to associate with those of the other sex whom he does n't and can't respect: that is worse than billiards: worse than tavern brandy-and-water: worse than smoking selfishness at home. But I vow I would rather see you turning over the leaves of Miss Fiddlecombe's music-book all night, than at billiards, or smoking, or brandy-and-water, or all three.

Remember, if a house is pleasant, and you like to remain in it, that to be well with the women of the house is the great, the vital point. If it is a good house, don't turn up your nose because you are only asked to come in the evening while others are invited to dine.

Recollect the debts of dinners which a hospitable family has to pay; who are you that you should always be expecting to nestle under the mahogany? Agreeable acquaintances are made just as well in the drawing-room as in the dining-room. Go to tea brisk and good-humored. Be determined to be pleased. Talk to a dowager, take a hand at whist. If you are musical, and know a song, sing it like a man. Never sulk about dancing, but off with you. You will find your acquaintance enlarge. Mothers, pleased with your good-humor, will probably ask you to Pocklington Square, to a little party. You will get on — you will form yourself a circle. You may marry a rich girl, or, at any rate, get the chance of seeing a number of the kind and the pretty.

Many young men, who are more remarkable for their impudence and selfishness than their good sense, are fond of boastfully announcing that they decline going to evening-parties at all,

unless, indeed, such entertainments commence with a good dinner, and a quantity of claret.

I never saw my beautiful-minded friend, Mrs. Y. Z., many times out of temper, but can quite pardon her indignation when young Fred Noodle, to whom the Y. Z.'s have been very kind, and who has appeared scores of times at their elegant table in Up—r B–k–r Street, announced, in an unlucky moment of flippancy, that he did not intend to go to evening-parties any more.

What induced Fred Noodle to utter this bravado I know not; whether it was that he has been puffed up by attentions from several Aldermen's families with whom he has of late become acquainted, and among whom he gives himself the airs of a prodigious "swell"; but having made this speech one Sunday after Church, when he condescended to call in B–k–r Street and show off his new gloves and waistcoat, and talked in a sufficiently dandified air about the opera (the wretched creature fan-

cies that an eight-and-sixpenny pit ticket gives him the privileges of a man of fashion), Noodle made his bow to the ladies, and strutted off to show his new yellow kids elsewhere.

"Matilda, my love, bring the Address Book," Mrs. Y. Z. said to her lovely eldest daughter as soon as Noodle was gone, and the banging hall-door had closed upon the absurd youth. That graceful and obedient girl rose, went to the back drawing-room, on a table in which apartment the volume lay, and brought the book to her mamma.

Mrs. Y. Z. turned to the letter N; and under that initial discovered the name of the young fellow who had just gone out. Noodle, F., 250, Jermyn Street, St. James's. She took a pen from the table before her, and with it deliberately crossed the name of Mr. Noodle out of her book. Matilda looked at Eliza, who stood by in silent awe. The sweet eldest girl, who has a kind feeling towards every soul alive, then looked towards her mother with

expostulating eyes, and said, "Oh, mamma!" Dear, dear Matilda! I love all pitiful hearts like thine.

But Mrs. Y. Z. was in no mood to be merciful, and gave way to a natural indignation and feeling of outraged justice.

"What business has that young man to tell me," she exclaimed, "that he declines going to evening-parties, when he knows that after Easter we have one or two? Has he not met with constant hospitality here since Mr. Y. Z. brought him home from the Club? Has he such *beaux yeux?* or has he so much wit? or is he a man of so much note, that his company at a dinner-table becomes indispensable? He is nobody; he is not handsome; he is not clever; he never opens his mouth except to drink your Papa's claret; and he declines evening-parties forsooth!—Mind, children, he is never invited into this house again."

When Y. Z. now meets young Noodle at the Club, that kind but feeble-minded old gentle-

man covers up his face with the newspaper, so as not to be seen by Noodle; or sidles away with his face to the bookcases, and lurks off by the door. The other day they met on the steps, when the wretched Noodle, driven *aux abois*, actually had the meanness to ask how Mrs. Y. Z. was? The Colonel (for such he is, and of the Bombay service too) said, — "My wife? Oh! — hum! — I 'm sorry to say Mrs. Y. Z. has been very poorly indeed, lately, very poorly; and confined to her room. God bless my soul! I 've an appointment at the India House, and it 's past two o'clock" — and he fled.

I had the malicious satisfaction of describing to Noodle the most sumptuous dinner which Y. Z. had given the day before, at which there was a Lord present, a Foreign Minister with his orders, two Generals with Stars, and every luxury of the season; but at the end of our conversation, seeing the effect it had upon the poor youth, and how miserably he was cast down, I told him the truth, viz., that the above

story was a hoax, and that if he wanted to get into Mrs. Y. Z.'s good graces again, his best plan was to go to Lady Flack's party, where I knew the Miss Y. Z.'s would be, and dance with them all night.

Yes, my dear Bob, you boys must pay with your persons, however lazy you may be — however much inclined to smoke at the Club, or to lie there and read the last delicious new novel; or averse to going home to a dreadful black set of chambers, where there is no fire; and at ten o'clock at night creeping shuddering into your ball suit, in order to go forth to an evening-party.

The dressing, the clean gloves, and cab-hire are nuisances, I grant you. The idea of a party itself is a bore, but you must go. When you are at the party, it is not so stupid; there is always something pleasant for the eye and attention of an observant man. There is a bustling Dowager wheedling and manœuvring to get proper partners for her girls; there

is a pretty girl enjoying herself with all her heart, and in all the pride of her beauty, than which I know no more charming object; — there is poor Miss Meggot, lonely up against the wall, whom nobody asks to dance, and with whom it is your bounden duty to waltz. There is always something to see or do, when you are there; and to evening-parties, I say, you must go.

Perhaps I speak with the ease of an old fellow who is out of the business, and beholds you from afar off. My dear boy, they don't want *us* at evening-parties. A stout, bald-headed man dancing is a melancholy object to himself in the looking-glass opposite, and there are duties and pleasures of all ages. Once, heaven help us, and only once, upon my honor, and I say so as a gentleman, some boys seized upon me and carried me to the Casino, where, forthwith, they found acquaintances and partners, and went whirling away in the double-timed waltz (it is an abominable

dance to me — I am an old fogy) along with hundreds more. I caught sight of a face in the crowd — the most blank, melancholy, and dreary old visage it was — my own face in the glass — there was no use in my being there. *Canities adest morosa* — no, not *morosa* — but, in fine, I had no business in the place, and so came away.

I saw enough of that Casino, however, to show to me that — but my paper is full, and on the subject of women I have more things to say, which might fill many hundred more pages.

IV

Some more Words about the Ladies.

SUFFER me to continue, my dear Bob, our remarks about women, and their influence over you young fellows — an influence so vast, for good or for evil.

I have, as you pretty well know, an immense sum of money in the Three per Cents, the possession of which does not, I think, decrease your respect for my character, and of which, at my demise, you will possibly have your share. But if I ever hear of you as a Casino haunter, as a frequenter of Races and Greenwich Fairs, and such amusements, in questionable company, I give you my honor you shall benefit by no legacy of mine, and I will divide the portion that was, and is I hope, to be yours, amongst your sisters.

Think, sir, of what they are, and of your mother at home, spotless and pious, loving and pure, and shape your own course so as to be worthy of them. Would you do anything to give them pain? Would you say anything that should bring a blush to their fair cheeks, or shock their gentle natures? At the Royal Academy Exhibition last year, when that great stupid, dandified donkey, Captain Grigg, in company with the other vulgar oaf, Mr. Gowker, ventured to stare, in rather an insolent manner, at your pretty little sister Fanny, who had come blushing from Miss Pinkerton's Academy, I saw how your honest face flushed up with indignation, as you caught a sight of the hideous grins and ogles of those two ruffians in varnished boots; and your eyes flashed out at them glances of defiance and warning so savage and terrible, that the discomfited wretches turned wisely upon their heels, and did not care to face such a resolute young champion as Bob Brown. What

is it that makes all your blood tingle, and fills all your heart with a vague and fierce desire to thrash somebody, when the idea of the possibility of an insult to that fair creature enters your mind? You can't bear to think that injury should be done to a being so sacred, so innocent, and so defenceless. You would do battle with a Goliath in her cause. Your sword would leap from its scabbard (that is, if you gentlemen from Pump Court wore swords and scabbards at the present period of time) to avenge or defend her.

Respect all beauty, all innocence, my dear Bob; defend all defencelessness in your sister, as in the sisters of other men. We have all heard the story of the Gentleman of the last century, who, when a crowd of young bucks and bloods in the Crush-room of the Opera were laughing and elbowing an old lady there — an old lady, lonely, ugly, and unprotected — went up to her respectfully and offered her his arm, took her down to his own carriage

which was in waiting, and walked home himself in the rain, — and twenty years afterwards had ten thousand a year left him by this very old lady, as a reward for that one act of politeness. We have all heard that story; nor do I think it is probable that you will have ten thousand a year left to you for being polite to a woman: but I say, be polite, at any rate. Be respectful to every woman. A manly and generous heart can be no otherwise; as a man would be gentle with a child, or take off his hat in a church.

I would have you apply this principle universally towards women — from the finest lady of your acquaintance down to the laundress who sets your Chambers in order. It may safely be asserted that the persons who joke with servants or barmaids at lodgings are not men of a high intellectual or moral capacity. To chuck a still-room maid under the chin, or to send off Molly the cook grinning, are not, to say the least of them, dignified acts in any

gentleman. The butcher-boy who brings the leg-of-mutton to Molly may converse with her over the area-railings; or the youthful grocer may exchange a few jocular remarks with Betty at the door as he hands in to her the tea and sugar; but not you. We must live according to our degree. I hint this to you, sir, by the way, and because the other night, as I was standing on the drawing-room landing-place, taking leave of our friends Mr. and Mrs. Fairfax, after a very agreeable dinner, I heard a giggling in the hall, where you were putting on your coat, and where that uncommonly good-looking parlor-maid was opening the door. And here, whilst on this subject, and whilst Mrs. Betty is helping you on with your coat, I would say, respecting your commerce with friends' servants and your own, be thankful to them, and they will be grateful to you in return, depend upon it. Let the young fellow who lives in lodgings respect the poor little maid who does the wondrous work of the house,

and not send her on too many errands, or ply his bell needlessly; if you visit any of your comrades in such circumstances, be you, too, respectful and kind in your tone to the poor little Abigail. If you frequent houses, as I hope you will, where are many good fellows and amiable ladies who cannot afford to have their doors opened or their tables attended by men, pray be particularly courteous (though by no means so marked in your attentions as on the occasion of the dinner at Mr. Fairfax's to which I have just alluded) to the women-servants. Thank them when they serve you. Give them a half-crown now and then — nay, as often as your means will permit. Those small gratuities make but a small sum in your year's expenses, and it may be said that the practice of giving them never impoverished a man yet: and, on the other hand, they give a deal of innocent happiness to a very worthy, active, kind set of folks.

But let us hasten from the hall-door to the

drawing-room, where Fortune has cast your lot in life: I want to explain to you why I am so anxious that you should devote yourself to that amiable lady who sits in it. Sir, I do not mean to tell you that there are no women in the world vulgar and ill-humored, rancorous and narrow-minded, mean schemers, son-in-law hunters, slaves of fashion, hypocrites; but I do respect, admire, and almost worship good women; and I think there is a very fair number of such to be found in this world, and I have no doubt, in every educated Englishman's circle of society, whether he finds that circle in palaces in Belgravia and May Fair, in snug little suburban villas, in ancient comfortable old Bloomsbury, or in back parlors behind the shop. It has been my fortune to meet with excellent English ladies in every one of these places — wives graceful and affectionate, matrons tender and good, daughters happy and pure-minded, and I urge the society of such on you, because I defy you to think evil in their

company. Walk into the drawing-room of Lady Z., that great lady: look at her charming face, and hear her voice. You know that she can't but be good, with such a face and such a voice. She is one of those fortunate beings on whom it has pleased heaven to bestow all sorts of its most precious gifts and richest worldly favors. With what grace she receives you; with what a frank kindness and natural sweetness and dignity! Her looks, her motions, her words, her thoughts, all seem to be beautiful and harmonious quite. See her with her children, what woman can be more simple and loving? After you have talked to her for a while, you very likely find that she is ten times as well read as you are: she has a hundred accomplishments which she is not in the least anxious to show off, and makes no more account of them than of her diamonds, or of the splendor round about her — to all of which she is born, and has a happy admirable claim of nature and possession — admirable and

happy for her and for us too; for is it not a happiness for us to admire her? Does anybody grudge her excellence to that paragon? Sir, we may be thankful to be admitted to contemplate such consummate goodness and beauty: and as in looking at a fine landscape or a fine work of art, every generous heart must be delighted and improved, and ought to feel grateful afterwards, so one may feel charmed and thankful for having the opportunity of knowing an almost perfect woman. Madam, if the gout and the custom of the world permitted, I would kneel down and kiss the hem of your ladyship's robe. To see your gracious face is a comfort — to see you walk to your carriage is a holiday. Drive her faithfully, O thou silver wigged coachman! drive to all sorts of splendors and honors and royal festivals. And for us, let us be glad that we should have the privilege to admire her.

Now, transport yourself in spirit, my good Bob, into another drawing-room. There sits

an old lady of more than fourscore years, serene and kind, and as beautiful in her age now as in her youth, when History toasted her. What has she not seen, and what is she not ready to tell? All the fame and wit, all the rank and beauty, of more than half a century, have passed through those rooms where you have the honor of making your best bow. She is as simple now as if she had never had any flattery to dazzle her: she is never tired of being pleased and being kind. Can that have been anything but a good life which, after more than eighty years of it are spent, is so calm? Could she look to the end of it so cheerfully, if its long course had not been pure? Respect her, I say, for being so happy, now that she is old. We do not know what goodness and charity, what affections, what trials, may have gone to make that charming sweetness of temper, and complete that perfect manner. But if we do not admire and reverence such an old age as that, and get good from con-

templating it, what are we to respect and admire?

Or shall we walk through the shop (while N. is recommending a tall copy to an amateur, or folding up a twopennyworth of letter-paper, and bowing to a poor customer in a jacket and apron with just as much respectful gravity as he would show while waiting upon a Duke), and see Mrs. N. playing with the child in the back parlor until N. shall come in to tea? They drink tea at five o'clock; and are actually as well bred as those gentlefolks who dine three hours later. Or will you please to step into Mrs. J.'s lodgings, who is waiting, and at work, until her husband comes home from Chambers? She blushes and puts the work away on hearing the knock, but when she sees who the visitor is, she takes it with a smile from behind the sofa cushion, and behold, it is one of J.'s waistcoats, on which she is sewing buttons. She might have been a Countess blazing in diamonds, had Fate so willed it,

and the higher her station the more she would have adorned it. But she looks as charming while plying her needle as the great lady in the palace whose equal she is, — in beauty, in goodness, in high-bred grace and simplicity: at least, I can't fancy her better, or any Peeress being more than her peer.

And it is with this sort of people, my dear Bob, that I recommend you to consort, if you can be so lucky as to meet with their society — nor do I think you are very likely to find many such at the Casino; or in the dancing-booths of Greenwich Fair on this present Easter Monday.

V

On Friendship — I.

CHOICE of friends, my dear Robert, is a point upon which every man about town should be instructed, as he should be careful. And as example, they say, is sometimes better than precept, and at the risk even of appearing somewhat ludicrous in your eyes, I will narrate to you an adventure which happened to myself, which is at once ridiculous and melancholy (at least to me), and which will show you how a man, not imprudent or incautious of his own nature, may be made to suffer by the imprudent selection of a friend. Attend then, my dear Bob, to "the History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia."

Sir, in the year 1810, I was a jolly young Bachelor, as you are now (indeed, it was three

years before I married your poor dear Aunt); I had a place in the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office; I had Chambers in Pump Court, *au troisième*, and led a not uncomfortable life there. I was a free and gay young fellow in those days (however much, sir, you may doubt the assertion, and think that I am changed), and not so particular in my choice of friends as subsequent experience has led me to be.

There lived in the set of Chambers opposite to mine, a Suffolk gentleman, of good family, whom I shall call Mr. Bludyer. Our boys or clerks first made acquaintance, and did each other mutual kind offices: borrowing for their respective masters' benefit, neither of whom was too richly provided with the world's goods, coals, blacking-brushes, crockery-ware, and the like; and our forks and spoons, if either of us had an entertainment in Chambers. As I learned presently that Mr. Bludyer had been educated at Oxford, and heard that his elder brother was a gentleman of good estate and

reputation in his county, I could have no objection to make his acquaintance, and accepted finally his invitation to meet a large game-pie which he had brought with him from the country, and I recollect I lent my own silver teapot, which figured handsomely on the occasion. It is the same one which I presented to you, when you took possession of your present apartments.

Mr. Bludyer was a sporting man: it was the custom in those days with many gentlemen to dress as much like coachmen as possible: in top-boots, huge white coats with capes, Belcher neckerchiefs, and the like adornments; and at the tables of bachelors of the very first fashion, you would meet with prize-fighters and jockeys, and hear a great deal about the prize-ring, the cock-pit, and the odds. I remember my Lord Tilbury was present at this breakfast (who afterwards lamentably broke his neck in a steeple-chase, by which the noble family became extinct), and for some time I confounded his lordship with Dutch Sam, who was also of the

party, and, indeed, not unlike the noble Viscount in dress and manner.

My acquaintance with Mr. Bludyer ripened into a sort of friendship. He was perfectly good-natured, and not ill-bred; and his jovial spirits and roaring stories amused a man who, though always of a peaceful turn, had no dislike to cheerful companions. We used to dine together at coffee-houses, for Clubs were scarcely invented in those days, except for the aristocracy; and, in fine, were very intimate. Bludyer, a brave and athletic man, would often give a loose to his spirits of an evening, and mill a Charley or two, as the phrase then was. The young bloods of those days thought it was no harm to spend a night in the watch-house, and I assure you it has accommodated a deal of good company. *Autres temps, autres mœurs.* In our own days, my good Bob, a station-house bench is not the bed for a gentleman.

I was at this time (and deservedly so, for I

had been very kind to her, and my elder brother, your father, neglected her considerably) the favorite nephew of your grand-aunt, my aunt, Mrs. General MacWhirter, who was left a very handsome fortune by the General, and to whom I do not scruple to confess I paid every attention to which her age, her sex, and her large income entitled her. I used to take sweetmeats to her poodle. I went and drank tea with her night after night. I accompanied her Sunday after Sunday to hear the Rev. Rowland Hill, at the Rotunda Chapel, over Blackfriars Bridge, and I used to read many of the tracts which she liberally supplied me — in fact, do everything to comfort and console a lady of peculiar opinions and habits who had a large jointure. Your father used to say I was a sneak, but he was then a boisterous young squire; and, perhaps, we were not particularly good friends.

Well, sir, my dear aunt, Mrs. General MacWhirter, made me her chief confidant. I reg-

ulated her money matters for her, and acted with her bankers and lawyers; and as she always spoke of your father as a reprobate, I had every reason to suppose I should inherit the property, the main part of which passed to another branch of the Browns. I do not grudge it, Bob; I do not grudge it. Your family is large; and I have enough from my poor dear departed wife.

Now it so happened that in June, 1811, — I recollect the comet was blazing furiously at the time, and Mrs. MacWhirter was of opinion that the world was at an end, — Mr. Bludyer, who was having his chambers in Pump Court painted, asked permission to occupy mine, where he wished to give a lunch to some people whom he was desirous to entertain. Thinking no harm, of course I said yes; and I went to my desk at the Tape and Sealing-Wax Office at my usual hour, giving instructions to my boy to make Mr. Bludyer's friends comfortable.

As ill-luck would have it, on that accursed

Friday, Mrs. MacWhirter, who had never been up my staircase before in her life (for your dear grand-aunt was large in person, and the apoplexy which carried her off soon after menaced her always), having some very particular business with her solicitors in Middle Temple Lane, and being anxious to consult me about a mortgage, actually mounted my stairs, and opened the door on which she saw written the name of Mr. Thomas Brown. She was a peculiar woman, I have said, attached to glaring colors in her dress, and, from her long residence in India, seldom without a set of costly birds of Paradise in her bonnet, and a splendid Cashmere shawl.

Fancy her astonishment then, on entering my apartments at three o'clock in the afternoon, to be assailed in the first place by a strong smell of tobacco-smoke which pervaded the passage, and by a wild and ferocious bulldog which flew at her on entering my sitting-room.

This bull-dog, sir, doubtless attracted by the brilliant colors of her costume, seized upon her, and pinned her down, screaming so that her voice drowned that of Bludyer himself, who was sitting on the table bellowing, "*A Southerly Wind and a Cloudy Sky proclaim a Hunting Morning*" — or some such ribald trash: and the brutal owner of the dog (who was no other than the famous Mulatto boxer, Norroy, called the "Black Prince" in the odious language of the Fancy, and who was inebriated doubtless at the moment), encouraged his dog in the assault upon this defenceless lady, and laughed at the agonies which she endured.

Mr. Bludyer, the black man, and one or two more, were arranging a fight on Moulsey Hurst, when my poor aunt made her appearance among these vulgar wretches. Although it was but three o'clock, they had sent to a neighboring tavern for gin-and-water, and the glasses sparkled on the board — to use a verse from a Bacchanalian song which I well remember

Mr. Bludyer used to yell forth — when I myself arrived from my office at my usual hour, half-past three. The black fellow and young Captain Cavendish of the Guards were the smokers; and it appears that at first all the gentlemen screamed with laughter; some of them called my aunt an "old girl;" and it was not until she had nearly fainted that the filthy Mulatto called the dog off from the flounce of her yellow gown of which he had hold.

When this poor victim of vulgarity asked with a scream — Where was her nephew? new roars of laughter broke out from the coarse gin-drinkers. "It 's the old woman whom he goes to meeting with!" cried out Bludyer. "Come away, boys!" And he led his brutalized crew out of my chambers into his own, where they finished, no doubt, their arrangements about the fight.

Sir, when I came home at my usual hour of half-past three, I found Mrs. MacWhirter in hysterics upon my sofa — the pipes were lying

about — the tin dish-covers — the cold kidneys — the tavern cruet-stands, and wretched remnants of the orgy were in disorder on the table-cloth, stained with beer. Seeing her fainting, I wildly bade my boy to open the window, and seizing a glass of water which was on the table, I presented it to her lips. — It was gin-and-water which I proffered to that poor lady.

She started up with a scream, which terrified me as I upset the glass: and with empurpled features, and a voice quivering and choking with anger, she vowed she would never forgive me. In vain I pleaded that I was ignorant of the whole of these disgraceful transactions. I went down on my knees to her, and begged her to be pacified; I called my boy, and bade him bear witness to my innocence: the impudent young fiend burst out laughing in my face, and I kicked him down stairs as soon as she was gone: for go she did directly to her carriage, which was in waiting in Middle Temple

Lane, and to which I followed her with tears in my eyes, amidst a crowd of jeering barristers' boys and Temple porters. But she pulled up the window in my face, and would no more come back to me than Eurydice would to Orpheus.

If I grow pathetic over this story, my dear Bob, have I not reason? Your great-aunt left thirty thousand pounds to your family, and the remainder to the missionaries, and it is a curious proof of the inconsistency of women, that she, a serious person, said on her death-bed that she would have left her money to me, if I had called out Mr. Bludyer, who insulted her, and with whom I certainly would have exchanged shots, had I thought that Mrs. MacWhirter would have encouraged any such murder.

My wishes, dear Bob, are moderate. Your aunt left me a handsome competency — and, I repeat, I do not grudge my brother George the money. Nor is it probable that such a calamity

can happen again to any one of our family — that would be too great misfortune. But I tell you the tale, because at least it shows you how important good company is, and that a young man about town should beware of his friends as well as of his enemies.

VI

On Friendship — ii.

THE other day I saw you walking by the Serpentine with young Lord Foozle, of the Windsor Heavies, who nodded to all sorts of suspicious broughams on the ride, while you looked about (you know you did, you young rascal) for acquaintances — as much as to say — "See! here am I, Bob Brown, of Pump Court, walking with a lord."

My dear Bob, I own that to walk with a lord, and to be seen with him, is a pleasant thing. Every man of the middle class likes to know persons of rank. If he says he don't — don't believe him. And I would certainly wish that you should associate with your superiors rather than your inferiors. There is no more dangerous or stupefying position for a

man in life than to be a cock of small society. It prevents his ideas from growing: it renders him intolerably conceited. A twopenny halfpenny Cæsar, a Brummagem dandy, a coterie philosopher or wit, is pretty sure to be an ass; and, in fine, I set it down as a maxim that it is good for a man to live where he can meet his betters, intellectual and social.

But if you fancy that getting into Lord Foozle's set will do you good or advance your prospects in life, my dear Bob, you are woefully mistaken. The Windsor Heavies are a most gentlemanlike, well-made, and useful set of men. The conversation of such of them as I have had the good fortune to meet, has not certainly inspired me with a respect for their intellectual qualities, nor is their life commonly of that kind which rigid ascetics would pronounce blameless. Some of the young men amongst them talk to the broughams, frequent the private boxes, dance at the Casinos: few read — many talk about horseflesh and the

odds after dinner, or relax with a little lansquenet or a little billiards at Pratt's.

My boy, it is not with the eye of a moralist that your venerable old uncle examines these youths, but rather of a natural philosopher, who inspects them as he would any other phenomenon, or queer bird, or odd fish, or fine flower. These fellows are like the flowers, and neither toil nor spin, but are decked out in magnificent apparel: and for some wise and useful purpose, no doubt. It is good that there should be honest, handsome, hard-living, hard-riding, stupid young Windsor Heavies — as that there should be polite young gentlemen in the Temple, or any other variety of our genus.

And it is good that you should go from time to time to the Heavies' mess, if they ask you; and know that worthy set of gentlemen. But beware, O Bob, how you live with them. Remember that your lot in life is to toil, and spin too — and calculate how much time it takes a

Heavy or a man of that condition to do nothing. Say, he dines at eight o'clock, and spends seven hours after dinner in pleasure. Well, if he goes to bed at three in the morning, that precious youth must have nine hours' sleep, which bring him to twelve o'clock next day, when he will have a headache probably, so that he can hardly be expected to dress, rally, have devilled chicken and pale ale, and get out before three. Friendship — the Club — the visits which he is compelled to pay, occupy him till five or six, and what time is there left for exercise and a ride in the Park, and for a second toilet preparatory to dinner, etc.? — He goes on his routine of pleasure, this young Heavy, as you in yours of duty — one man in London is pretty nearly as busy as another. The company of young "Swells," then, if you will permit me the word, is not for you. You must consider that you should not spend more than a certain sum for your dinner — they need not. You wear a black coat, and they a shining cuirass

and monstrous epaulets. Yours is the useful part in life, and theirs the splendid — though why speak further on this subject? Since the days of the Frog and the Bull, a desire to cope with Bulls has been known to be fatal to Frogs.

And to know young noblemen, and brilliant and notorious town bucks and leaders of fashion, has this great disadvantage — that if you talk about them or are seen with them much, you offend all your friends of middle life. It makes men angry to see their acquaintances better off than they themselves are. If you live much with great people, others will be sure to say that you are a sneak. I have known Jack Jolliff, whose fun and spirits made him adored by the dandies (for they are just such folks as you and I, only with not quite such good brains, and perhaps better manners — simple folks who want to be amused) — I have known Jack Jolliff, I say, offend a whole roomful of men by telling us

that he had been dining with a Duke. *We* had n't been to dine with a Duke. We were not courted by grandees — and we disliked the man who was, and said he was a parasite, because men of fashion courted him. I don't know any means by which men hurt themselves more in the estimation of their equals than this of talking of great folks. A man may mean no harm by it — he speaks of the grandees with whom he lives, as you and I do of Jack and Tom who give us dinners. But his old acquaintances do not forgive him his superiority, and set the Tufthunted down as the Tufthunter.

I remember laughing at the jocular complaint made by one of this sort, a friend, whom I shall call Main. After Main published his "Travels in the Libyan Desert" four years ago, he became a literary lion, and roared in many of the metropolitan *salons*. He is a good-natured fellow, never in the least puffed up by his literary success; and always said

that it would not last. His greatest leonine quality, however, is his appetite; and to behold him engaged on a Club joint, or to see him make away with pounds of turbot, and plate after plate of *entrées*, roasts, and sweets, is indeed a remarkable sight, and refreshing to those who like to watch animals feeding. But since Main has gone out of, and other authors have come into, fashion — the poor fellow comically grumbles: "That year of lionization has ruined me. The people who used to ask me before, don't ask me any more. They are afraid to invite me to Bloomsbury, because they fancy I am accustomed to May Fair, and May Fair has long since taken up with a new roarer — so that I am quite alone!" And thus he dines at the Club almost every day at his own charges now, and attacks the joint. I do not envy the man who comes after him to the haunch of mutton.

If Fate, then, my dear Bob, should bring you in contact with a lord or two, eat their

dinners, enjoy their company, but be mum about them when you go away.

And though it is a hard and cruel thing to say, I would urge you, my dear Bob, specially to be ware of taking pleasant fellows for your friends. Choose a good disagreeable friend, if you be wise — a surly, steady, economical, rigid fellow. All jolly fellows, all delights of Club smoking-rooms and billiard-rooms, all fellows who sing a capital song, and the like, are sure to be poor. As they are free with their own money, so will they be with yours; and their very generosity and goodness of disposition will prevent them from having the means of paying you back. They lend their money to some other jolly fellows. They accommodate each other by putting their jolly names to the backs of jolly bills. Gentlemen in Cursitor Street are on the lookout for them. Their tradesmen ask for them, and find them not. Ah! Bob, it's hard times with a gentleman, when he has to

walk round a street for fear of meeting a creditor there, and for a man of courage, when he can't look a tailor in the face.

Eschew jolly fellows then, my boy, as the most dangerous and costly of company; and apropos of bills — if I ever hear of your putting your name to stamped paper — I will disown you, and cut you off with a protested shilling.

I know many men who say (whereby I have my private opinion of their own probity) that all poor people are dishonest: this is a hard word, though more generally true than some folks suppose — but I fear that all people much in debt are not honest. A man who has to wheedle a tradesman is not going through a very honorable business in life — a man with a bill becoming due to-morrow morning, and putting a good face on it in the Club, is perforce a hypocrite whilst he is talking to you — a man who has to do any meanness about money I fear me is so nearly like

a rogue that it 's not much use calculating where the difference lies. Let us be very gentle with our neighbors' failings; and forgive our friends their debts, as we hope ourselves to be forgiven. But the best thing of all to do with your debts is to pay them. Make none; and don't live with people who do. Why, if I dine with a man who is notoriously living beyond his means, I am a hypocrite certainly myself, and I fear a bit of a rogue too. I try to make my host believe that I believe him an honest fellow. I look his sham splendor in the face without saying, "You are an impostor." — Alas, Robert, I have partaken of feasts where it seemed to me that the plate, the viands, the wine, the servants, and butlers, were all sham, like Cinderella's coach and footmen, and would turn into rats and mice, and an old shoe or a cabbage-stalk, as soon as we were out of the house and the clock struck twelve.

VII

Mr. Brown the Elder takes Mr. Brown the Younger to a Club — i.

PRESUMING that my dear Bobby would scarcely consider himself to be an accomplished man about town, until he had obtained an entrance into a respectable Club, I am happy to inform you that you are this day elected a Member of the "Polyanthus," having been proposed by my friend, Lord Viscount Colchicum, and seconded by your affectionate uncle. I have settled with Mr. Stiff, the worthy Secretary, the preliminary pecuniary arrangements regarding the entrance fee and the first annual subscription — the ensuing payments I shall leave to my worthy nephew.

You were elected, sir, with but two black

balls; and every other man who was put up for ballot had four, with the exception of Tom Harico, who had more black beans than white. Do not, however, be puffed up by this victory, and fancy yourself more popular than other men. Indeed, I don't mind telling you (but, of course, I do not wish it to go any further) that Captain Slyboots and I, having suspicions of the Meeting, popped a couple of adverse balls into the other candidates' boxes; so that, at least, you should, in case of mishap, not be unaccompanied in ill fortune.

Now, then, that you are a member of the "Polyanthus," I trust you will comport yourself with propriety in the place: and permit me to offer you a few hints with regard to your bearing.

We are not so stiff at the "Polyanthus" as at some clubs I could name — and a good deal of decent intimacy takes place amongst us. — Do not therefore enter the Club, as I have seen men do at the "Chokers" (of which I

am also a member), with your eyes scowling under your hat at your neighbor, with an expression of countenance which seems to say, "Hang your impudence, sir! How dare you stare at *me?*" Banish that absurd dignity and swagger, which do not at all become your youthful countenance, my dear Bob, and let us walk up the steps and into the place. See, old Noseworthy is in the bow-window reading the paper — he is always in the bow-window reading the paper.

We pass by the worthy porter, and alert pages — a fifteen-hundredth part of each of whom is henceforth your paid-for property — and you see he takes down your name as Mr. R. Brown, Junior, and will know you and be civil to you until death — Ha, there is Jawkins, as usual; he has nailed poor Styles up against a pillar, and is telling him what the opinion of the City is about George Hudson, Esq., and when Sir Robert will take the government. How d' you do, Jawkins? — Satisfactory news

from India? Gilbert to be made Baron Gilbert of Goojerat? Indeed, I don't introduce you to Jawkins, my poor Bob; he will do that for himself, and you will have quite enough of him before many days are over.

Those three gentlemen sitting on the sofa are from our beloved sister island; they come here every day, and wait for the Honorable Member for Ballinafad, who is at present in the writing-room.

I have remarked, in London, however, that every Irish gentleman is accompanied by other Irish gentlemen, who wait for him as here, or at the corner of the street. These are waiting until the Honorable Member for Ballinafad can get them three places, in the Excise, in the Customs, and a little thing in the Post Office, no doubt. One of them sends home a tremendous account of parties and politics here, which appears in the *Ballinafad Banner*. He knows everything. He has just been closeted with Peel, and can vouch for it that

Clarendon has been sent for. He knows who wrote the famous pamphlet, "Ways and Means for Ireland," — all the secrets of the present Cabinet, the designs of Sir James Graham. How Lord John can live under those articles which he writes in the *Banner* is a miracle to me! I hope he will get that little thing in the Post Office soon.

This is the newspaper-room — enter the Porter with the evening papers — what a rush the men make for them! Do you want to see one? Here is the *Standard* — nice article about the "Starling Club" — very pleasant, candid, gentlemanlike notice — Club composed of clergymen, atheists, authors, and artists. Their chief conversation is blasphemy: they have statues of Socrates and Mahomet on the centre-piece of the dinner-table, take every opportunity of being disrespectful to Moses, and a dignified clergyman always proposes the Glorious, Pious, and Immortal Memory of Confucius. Grace is said backwards, and the

Catechism treated with the most irreverent ribaldry by the comic authors and the general company. — Are these men to be allowed to meet and their horrid orgies to continue? Have you had enough? — Let us go into the other rooms.

What a calm and pleasant seclusion the library presents after the bawl and bustle of the newspaper-room! There is never anybody here. English gentlemen get up such a prodigious quantity of knowledge in their early life, that they leave off reading soon after they begin to shave, or never look at anything but a newspaper. How pleasant this room is, — is n't it? with its sober draperies, and long calm lines of peaceful volumes — nothing to interrupt the quiet — only the melody of Horner's nose as he lies asleep upon one of the sofas. What is he reading? Hah! "Pendennis," No. VII., — hum, let us pass on. Have you read "David Copperfield," by the way? How beautiful it is — how charmingly

fresh and simple! In those admirable touches of tender humor — and I should call humor, Bob, a mixture of love and wit — who can equal this great genius? There are little words and phrases in his books which are like personal benefits to the reader. What a place it is to hold in the affections of men! What an awful responsibility hanging over a writer! What man holding such a place, and knowing that his words go forth to vast congregations of mankind, — to grown folks — to their children, and perhaps to their children's children, — but must think of his calling with a solemn and humble heart! May love and truth guide such a man always! It is an awful prayer; may Heaven further its fulfilment. And then, Bob, let the *Record* revile him — See, here's Horner waking up. — How do you do, Horner?

This neighboring room, which is almost as quiet as the library, is the card-room, you see. There are always three or four devotees assem-

bled in it: and the lamps are scarcely ever out in this Temple of Trumps.

I admire, as I see them, my dear Bobby, grave and silent at these little green tables, not moved outwardly by grief or pleasure at losing or winning, but calmly pursuing their game (as that pursuit is called, which is in fact the most elaborate science and study) at noonday, entirely absorbed, and philosophically indifferent to the bustle and turmoil of the enormous working world without. Disraeli may make his best speech; the Hungarians may march into Vienna; the Protectionists come in; Louis Philippe be restored; or the Thames set on fire; and Colonel Pam and Mr. Trumpington will never leave their table, so engaging is their occupation at it. The turning up of an ace is of more interest to them than all the affairs of all the world besides — and so they will go on until Death summons them, and their last trump is played.

It is curious to think that a century ago

almost all gentlemen, soldiers, statesmen, men of science, and divines, passed hours at play every day; as our grandmothers did likewise. The poor old kings and queens must feel the desertion now, and deplore the present small number of their worshippers, as compared to the myriads of faithful subjects who served them in past times.

I do not say that other folks' pursuits are much more or less futile; but fancy a life such as that of the Colonel — eight or nine hours of sleep, eight of trumps, and the rest for business, reading, exercise, and domestic duty or affection (to be sure he's most likely a bachelor, so that the latter offices do not occupy him much) — fancy such a life, and at its conclusion at the age of seventy-five, the worthy gentleman being able to say, I have spent twenty-five years of my existence turning up trumps.

With Trumpington matters are different. Whist is a profession with him, just as much

as Law is yours. He makes the deepest study of it — he makes every sacrifice to his pursuit; he may be fond of wine and company, but he eschews both, to keep his head cool and play his rubber. He is a man of good parts, and was once well read, as you see by his conversation when he is away from the table, but he gives up reading for play — and knows that to play well a man must play every day. He makes three or four hundred a year by his Whist, and well he may — with his brains, and half his industry, he could make a larger income at any other profession.

In a game with these two gentlemen, the one who has been actually seated at that card-table for a term as long as your whole life, the other who is known as a consummate practitioner, do you think it is likely you will come off a winner? The state of your fortune is your lookout, not theirs. They are there at their posts — like knights ready to meet all comers. If you choose to engage them, sit

down. They will, with the most perfect probity, calmness, and elegance of manner, win and win of you until they have won every shilling of a fortune, when they will make you a bow, and wish you good morning. You may go and drown yourself afterwards — it is not their business. Their business is to be present in that room, and to play cards with you or anybody. When you are done with — *Bon jour*. My dear Colonel, let me introduce you a new member, my nephew, Mr. Robert Brown.

The other two men at the table are the Honorable G. Windgall and Mr. Chanter: perhaps you have not heard that the one made rather a queer settlement at the last Derby; and the other has just issued from one of Her Majesty's establishments in St. George's Fields.

Either of these gentlemen is perfectly affable, good-natured, and easy of access — and will cut you for half-crowns if you like, or play you at any game on the cards. They descend from their broughams or from horse-

back at the Club door with the most splendid air, and they feast upon the best dishes and wines in the place.

But do you think it advisable to play cards with them? Which know the games best — you or they? Which are most likely — we will not say to play foul — but to take certain little advantages in the game which their consummate experience teaches them — you or they? Finally, is it a matter of perfect certainty, if you won, that they would pay you?

Let us leave these gentlemen, my dear Bob, and go through the rest of the house.

VIII

Mr. Brown the Elder takes Mr. Brown the Younger to a Club—ii.

FROM the library we proceed to the carved and gilded drawing-room of the Club, the damask hangings of which are embroidered with our lovely emblem, the Polyanthus, and which is fitted with a perfectly unintelligible splendor. Sardanapalus, if he had pawned one of his kingdoms, could not have had such mirrors as one of those in which I see my dear Bob admiring the tie of his cravat with such complacency, and I am sure I cannot comprehend why Smith and Brown should have their persons reflected in such vast sheets of quicksilver; or why, if we have a mind to a sixpenny cup of tea and muffins, when we come in with muddy boots

from a dirty walk, those refreshments should be served to us as we occupy a sofa much more splendid, and far better stuffed, than any Louis Quatorze ever sat upon. I want a sofa, as I want a friend, upon which I can repose familiarly. If you can't have intimate terms and freedom with one and the other, they are of no good. A full-dress Club is an absurdity — and no man ought to come into this room except in a uniform or court suit. I dare n't put my feet on yonder sofa for fear of sullying the damask, or, worse still, for fear that Hicks, the Committee-man, should pass, and spy out my sacrilegious boots on the cushion.

We pass through these double-doors, and enter rooms of a very different character.

By the faint and sickly odor pervading this apartment, by the opened windows, by the circular stains upon the marble tables, which indicate the presence of brandies-and-waters long passed into the world of spirits, my dear

Bob will have no difficulty in recognizing the smoking-room, where I dare say he will pass a good deal of his valuable time henceforth.

If I could recommend a sure way of advancement and profit to a young man about town, it would be, after he has come away from a friend's house and dinner, where he has to a surety had more than enough of claret and good things, when he ought to be going to bed at midnight, so that he might rise fresh and early for his morning's work, to stop, nevertheless, for a couple of hours at the Club, and smoke in this room and tipple weak brandy-and-water.

By a perseverance in this system, you may get a number of advantages. By sitting up till three of a summer morning, you have the advantage of seeing the sun rise, and as you walk home to Pump Court can mark the quiet of the streets in the rosy glimmer of the dawn. You can easily spend in that smoking-room (as for the billiard-room adjacent,

how much more can't you get rid of there), and without any inconvenience or extravagance whatever, enough money to keep you a horse. Three or four cigars when you are in the Club, your case filled when you are going away, a couple of glasses of very weak cognac and cold water, will cost you sixty pounds a year, as sure as your name is Bob Brown. And as for the smoking and tippling, plus billiards, they may be made to cost anything.

And then you have the advantage of hearing such delightful and instructive conversation in a Club smoking-room, between the hours of twelve and three! Men who frequent that place at that hour are commonly men of studious habits and philosophical and reflective minds, to whose opinions it is pleasant and profitable to listen. They are full of anecdotes, which are always moral and well chosen; their talk is never free, or on light subjects. I have one or two old smoking-room pillars in my eye now, who would be

perfect models for any young gentleman entering life, and to whom a father could not do better than intrust the education of his son.

To drop the satirical vein, my dear Bob, I am compelled as a man to say my opinion, that the best thing you can do with regard to that smoking-room is to keep out of it; or at any rate never to be seen in the place after midnight. They are very pleasant and frank, those jolly fellows, those loose fishes, those fast young men — but the race in life is not to such fast young men as these — and you who want to win must get up early of a morning, my boy. You and an old college-chum or two may sit together over your cigar-boxes in one another's chambers, and talk till all hours, and do yourselves good, probably. Talking among you is a wholesome exercitation; humor comes in an easy flow; it doesn't preclude grave argument and manly interchange of thought — I own myself, when I was younger, to have smoked many a pipe with

advantage in the company of Dr. Parr. Honest men, with pipes or cigars in their mouths, have great physical advantages in conversation. You may stop talking if you like — but the breaks of silence never seem disagreeable, being filled up by the puffing of the smoke — hence there is no awkwardness in resuming the conversation — no straining for effect — sentiments are delivered in a grave, easy manner — the cigar harmonizes the society, and soothes at once the speaker and the subject whereon he converses. I have no doubt that it is from the habit of smoking that Turks and American Indians are such monstrous well-bred men. The pipe draws wisdom from the lips of the philosopher, and shuts up the mouth of the foolish; it generates a style of conversation, contemplative, thoughtful, benevolent, and unaffected: in fact, dear Bob, I must out with it — I am an old smoker. At home I have done it up the chimney rather than not do it (the which I

own is a crime). I vow and believe that the cigar has been one of the greatest creature-comforts of my life — a kind companion, a gentle stimulant, an amiable anodyne, a cementer of friendship. May I die if I abuse that kindly weed which has given me so much pleasure!

Since I have been a member of that Club, what numbers of men have occupied this room and departed from it, like so many smoked-out cigars, leaving nothing behind but a little disregarded ashes! Bob, my boy, they drop off in the course of twenty years, our boon companions, and jolly fellow bottle-crackers — I mind me of many a good fellow who has talked and laughed here, and whose pipe is put out forever. Men, I remember as dashing youngsters but the other day, have passed into the state of old fogies: they have sons, sir, of almost our age, when first we joined the "Polyanthus." Grass grows over others in all parts of the world. Where is poor Ned? Where

is poor Fred? Dead rhymes with Ned and Fred too — their place knows them not — their names one year appeared at the end of the Club list, under the dismal category of "Members Deceased," in which you and I shall rank some day. Do you keep that subject steadily in your mind? I do not see why one should n't meditate upon Death in Pall Mall as well as in a howling wilderness. There is enough to remind one of it at every corner. There is a strange face looking out of Jack's old lodgings in Jermyn Street, — somebody else has got the Club chair which Tom used to occupy. He does n't dine here and grumble as he used formerly. He has been sent for, and has not come back again — one day Fate will send for us, and we shall not return — and the people will come down to the Club as usual, saying, "Well, and so poor old Brown is gone." — Indeed, a smoking-room on a morning is not a cheerful spot.

Our room has a series of tenants of quite

distinct characters. After an early and sober dinner below, certain *habitués* of the "Polyanthus" mount up to this apartment for their coffee and cigar, and talk as gravely as Sachems at a Palaver. Trade and travel, politics and geography, are their discourse — they are in bed long before their successors the jolly fellows begin their night life, and the talk of the one set is as different to the conversation of the other, as any talk can be.

After the grave old Sachems, come other frequenters of the room; a squad of sporting men very likely — very solemn and silent personages these — who give the odds, and talk about the Cup in a darkling undertone. Then you shall have three or four barristers with high voices, seldom able to sit long without talking of their profession, or mentioning something about Westminster Hall. About eleven, men in white neck-cloths drop in from dinner-parties, and show their lacquered boots and shirt-studs with a little complacency — and at

midnight, after the theatres, the young rakes and *viveurs* come swaggering in, and call loudly for gin-twist.

But as for a Club smoking-room after midnight, I vow again that you are better out of it; that you will waste money and your precious hours and health there; and you may frequent this "Polyanthus" room for a year, and not carry away from the place one single idea or story that can do you the least good in life. How much you shall take away of another sort, I do not here set down; but I have before my mind's eye the image of old Silenus, with purple face and chalk-stone fingers, telling his foul old garrison legends over his gin-and-water. He is in the smoking-room every night; and I feel that no one can get benefit from the society of that old man.

What society he has he gets from this place. He sits for hours in a corner of the sofa, and makes up his parties here. He will ask you after a little time, seeing that you are a gentle-

man and have a good address, and will give you an exceedingly good dinner. I went once, years ago, to a banquet of his — and found all the men at his table were Polyanthuses: so that it was a house dinner in ——— Square, with Mrs. Silenus at the head of the table.

After dinner she retired and was no more seen, and Silenus amused himself by making poor Mr. Tippleton drunk. He came to the Club the next day, he amused himself by describing the arts by which he had practised upon the easy brains of poor Mr. Tippleton — (as if that poor fellow wanted any arts of persuasion to induce him to intoxicate himself), and told all the smoking-room how he had given a dinner, how many bottles of wine had been emptied, and how many Tippleton had drunk for his share. "I kept my eye on Tip, sir," the horrid old fellow said — "I took care to make him mix his liquors well, and before eleven o'clock I finished him, and had him as drunk as a lord, sir!" Will you like to have

that gentleman for a friend? He has elected himself our smoking-room king at the "Polyanthus," and midnight monarch.

As he talks, in comes poor Tippleton — a kind soul — a gentleman — a man of reading and parts — who has friends at home very likely, and had once a career before him — and what is he now? His eyes are vacant; he reels into a sofa corner, and sits in maudlin silence, and hiccoughs every now and then. Old Silenus winks knowingly round at the whole smoking-room: most of the men sneer — some pity — some very young cubs laugh and jeer at him. Tippleton 's drunk.

IX

Mr. Brown the Elder takes Mr. Brown the Younger to a Club — iii.

FROM the Library and Smoking-room regions let us descend to the lower floor. Here you behold the Coffee-room, where the neat little tables are already laid out, awaiting the influx of diners.

A great advance in civilization was made, and the honesty as well as economy of young men of the middle classes immensely promoted, when the ancient tavern system was overthrown, and those houses of meeting instituted where a man, without sacrificing his dignity, could dine for a couple of shillings. I remember in the days of my youth when a very moderate dinner at a reputable coffee-house cost a man half a guinea: when you were obliged to

order a pint of wine for the good of the house; when the waiter got a shilling for his attendance; and when young gentlemen were no richer than they are now, and had to pay thrice as much as they at present need to disburse for the maintenance of their station.

Then men (who had not the half-guinea at command) used to dive into dark streets in the vicinage of Soho or Covent Garden, and get a meagre meal at shilling taverns — or Tom, the clerk, issued out from your Chambers in Pump Court and brought back your dinner between two plates from a neighboring ham-and-beef shop. Either repast was strictly honorable, and one can find no earthly fault with a poor gentleman for eating a poor meal. But that solitary meal in Chambers was indeed a dismal refection. I think with anything but regret of those lonely feasts of beef and cabbage; and how there was no resource for the long evenings but those books, over which you had been poring all day, or the tavern with its

deuced expenses, or the theatre with its vicious attractions. A young bachelor's life was a clumsy piece of wretchedness then — mismanaged and ill-economized — just as your Temple Chambers or College rooms now are, which are quite behind the age in the decent conveniences which every modern tenement possesses.

And that dining for a shilling and strutting about Pall Mall afterwards was, after all, an hypocrisy. At the time when the "*Trois Frères Provençaux*" at Paris had two entrances, one into the place of the Palais Royal, and one into the street behind, where the sixteen-sous dinner-houses are, I have seen bucks with profuse toothpicks walk out of these latter houses of entertainment, pass up the "*Trois Frères*" stairs, and descend from the other door into the Palais Royal, so that the people walking there might fancy these poor fellows had been dining regardless of expense. No; what you call putting a good face upon poverty, that is, hiding it under a grin, or conceal-

ing its rags under a makeshift, is always rather a base stratagem. Your Beaux Tibbs and twopenny dandies can never be respectable altogether, and if a man is poor, I say he ought to seem poor; and that both he and Society are in the wrong, if either sees any cause of shame in poverty.

That is why we ought to be thankful for Clubs. Here is no skulking to get a cheap dinner; no ordering of expensive liquors and dishes for the good of the house, or cowering sensitiveness as to the opinion of the waiter. We advance in simplicity and honesty as we advance in civilization, and it is my belief that we become better bred and less artificial, and tell more truth every day.

This, you see, is the Club Coffee-room — it is three o'clock; young Wideawake is just finishing his breakfast (with whom I have nothing to do at present, but to say parenthetically, that if you *will* sit up till five o'clock in the morning, Bob my boy, you may look out to

have a headache and a breakfast at three in the afternoon). Wideawake is at breakfast — Goldsworthy is ordering his dinner — while Mr. Nudgit, whom you see yonder, is making his lunch. In those two gentlemen is the moral and exemplification of the previous little remarks which I have been making.

You must know, sir, that at the "Polyanthus," in common with most Clubs, gentlemen are allowed to enjoy, gratis, in the Coffee-room, bread, beer, sauces, and pickles.

After four o'clock, if you order your dinner, you have to pay sixpence for what is called the table — the clean cloth, the vegetables, cheese, and so forth; before that hour you may have lunch, when there is no table charge.

Now, Goldsworthy is a gentleman and a man of genius, who has courage and simplicity enough to be poor — not like some fellows whom one meets, and who make a *fanfaronnade* of poverty, and, draping themselves in their rags, seem to cry, "See how virtuous I

am, — how honest Diogenes is!" but he is a very poor man, whose education and talents are of the best, and who in so far claims to rank with the very best people in the world. In his place in Parliament, when he takes off his hat (which is both old and well brushed), the Speaker's eye is pretty sure to meet his, and the House listens to him with the respect which is due to so much honesty and talent. He is the equal of any man, however lofty and wealthy. His social position is rather improved by his poverty, and the world, which is a manly and generous world in its impulses, however it may be in its practice, contemplates with a sincere regard and admiration Mr. Goldsworthy's manner of bearing his lack of fortune. He is going to dine for a shilling; he will have two mutton-chops (and the mutton-chop is a thing unknown in domestic life and in the palaces of epicures, where you may get cutlets dressed with all sorts of French sauces, but not the admirable mutton-chop),

and with a due allowance of the Club bread and beer, he will make a perfectly wholesome, and sufficient, and excellent meal; and go down to the House and fire into Ministers this very night.

Now, I say, this man dining for a shilling is a pleasant spectacle to behold. I respect Mr. Goldsworthy with all my heart, without sharing those ultra-conservative political opinions which we all know he entertains, and from which no interest, temptation, or hope of place will cause him to swerve; and you see he is waited upon with as much respect here as old Silenus, though he order the most sumptuous banquet the cook can devise, or bully the waiters ever so.

But ah, Bob! what can we say of the conduct of that poor little Mr. Nudgit? He has a bedchamber in some court unknown in the neighborhood of the "Polyanthus." He makes a breakfast with the Club bread and beer; he lunches off the same supplies — and being of

an Epicurean taste, look what he does — he is actually pouring a cruet of anchovy sauce over his bread to give it a flavor; and I have seen the unconscionable little gourmand sidle off to the pickle-jars when he thought nobody was observing, and pop a walnut or half a dozen of pickled onions into his mouth, and swallow them with a hideous furtive relish.

He disappears at dinner-time, and returns at half-past seven or eight o'clock, and wanders round the tables when the men are at their dessert and generous over their wine. He has a number of little stories about the fashionable world to tell, and is not unentertaining. When you dine here, sometimes give Nudgit a glass or two out of your decanter, Bob, my boy, and comfort his poor old soul. He was a gentleman once and had money, as he will be sure to tell you. He is mean and feeble, but not unkind — a poor little parasite not to be unpitied. Mr. Nudgit, allow me to intro-

duce you to a new member, my nephew, Mr. Robert Brown.

At this moment, old Silenus swaggers in, bearing his great waistcoat before him, and walking up to the desk where the coffee-room clerk sits and where the bills of fare are displayed. As he passes, he has to undergo the fire of Mr. Goldsworthy's eyes, which dart out at him two flashes of the most killing scorn. He has passed by the battery without sinking, and lays himself alongside the desk. Nudgit watches him, and will presently go up smirking humbly to join him.

"Hunt," he says, "I want a table, my table, you know, at seven — dinner for eight — Lord Hobanob dines with me — send the butler — What's in the bill of fare? Let's have clear soup and turtle — I've sent it in from the city — dressed fish and turbot," and with a swollen trembling hand he writes down a pompous bill of fare.

As I said, Nudgit comes up simpering, with a newspaper in his hand.

"Hullo, Nudg!" says Mr. Silenus, "how's the beer? Pickles good to-day?"

Nudgit smiles in a gentle deprecatory manner.

"Smell out a good dinner, hey, Nudg?" says Dives.

"If any man knows how to give one, you do," answers the poor beggar. "I wasn't a bad hand at ordering a dinner myself, once; what's the fish in the list to-day?" and with a weak smile he casts his eye over the bill of fare.

"Lord Hobanob dines with me, and *he* knows what a good dinner is, I can tell you," says Mr. Silenus; "so does Cramley."

"Both well-known epicures," says Nudgit.

"I'm going to give Hobanob a return dinner to his at the 'Rhododendrum.' He bet me that Batifol, the *chef* at the 'Rhododendrum,' did better than our man can. Hob's

dinner was last Wednesday, and I don't say it was n't a good one; or that taking Grosbois by surprise is giving him quite fair play — but we 'll see, Nudgit. *I* know what Grosbois can do."

"I should think you did, indeed, Silenus," says the other.

"I see your mouth 's watering. I 'd ask you, only I know you 're engaged. You 're always engaged, Nudgit — not to-day? Well then, you may come; and I say, Mr. Nudgit, we 'll have a wet evening, sir, mind you that."

Mr. Bowls, the butler, here coming in, Mr. Silenus falls into conversation with him about wines and icing. I am glad poor Nudgit has got his dinner. He will go and walk in the Park to get up an appetite. And now, Mr. Bob, having shown you over your new house, I too will bid you for the present farewell.

X

A Word about Balls in Season.

WHEN my good friend, *Mr. Punch*, some time since, asked me to compile a series of conversations for young men in the dancing world, so that they might be agreeable to their partners, and advance their own success in life, I consented with a willing heart to my venerable friend's request, for I desire nothing better than to promote the amusement and happiness of all young people: and nothing, I thought, would be easier than to touch off a few light, airy, graceful little sets of phrases, which young fellows might adopt or expand, according to their own ingenuity and leisure.

Well, sir, I imagined myself, just for an instant, to be young again, and that I had a

neat waist instead of that bow-window with which Time and Nature have ornamented the castle of my body, and brown locks instead of a bald pate (there was a time, sir, when my hair was not considered the worst part of me, and I recollect when I was a young man in the Militia, and when pigtails finally went out in our corps, who it was that longed to have my *queue* — it was found in her desk at her death, and my poor dear wife was always jealous of her) — I just chose, I say, to fancy myself a young man, and that I would go up in imagination and ask a girl to dance with me. So I chose Maria — a man might go farther and fare worse than choose Maria, Mr. Bob.

"My dear Miss E.," says I, "may I have the honor of dancing the next set with you?"

"The next *what?*" says Miss E., smiling, and turning to Mrs. E., as if to ask what a set meant.

"I forgot," says I; "the next quadrille, I would say."

"It is rather slow dancing quadrilles," says Miss E.; "but if I must, I must."

"Well, then, a waltz, will that do? I know nothing prettier than a waltz played not too quick."

"What!" says she, "do you want a horrid old three-timed waltz, like that which the little figures dance upon the barrel-organs? You silly old creature: you are good-natured, but you are in your dotage. All these dances are passed away. You might as well ask me to wear a gown with a waist up to my shoulders, like that in which mamma was married; or a hoop and high heels, like grandmamma in the picture; or to dance a gavotte or a minuet. Things are changed, old gentleman — the fashions of your time are gone, and — and the bucks of your time will go too, Mr. Brown. If I want to dance, here is Captain Whiskerfield, who is ready; or young Stud-

dington, who is a delightful partner. He brings a little animation into our balls; and when he is not in society, dances every night at Vauxhall and the Casino."

I pictured to myself Maria giving some such reply to my equally imaginative demand — for of course I never made the request, any more than she did the answer — and in fact, dear Bob, after turning over the matter of ball-room conversations in my mind, and sitting with pen and ink before me for a couple of hours, I found that I had nothing at all to say on the subject, and have no more right to teach a youth what he is to say in the present day to his partner, than I should have had in my own boyhood to instruct my own grandmother in the art of sucking eggs. We should pay as much reverence to youth as we should to age; there are points in which you young folks are altogether our superiors: and I can't help constantly crying out to persons of my own years, when busied about their

young people — leave them alone; don't be always meddling with their affairs, which they can manage for themselves; don't be always insisting upon managing their boats, and putting your oars in the water with theirs.

So I have the modesty to think that *Mr. Punch* and I were a couple of conceited old fogies, in devising the above plan of composing conversation for the benefit of youth, and that young folk can manage to talk of what interests them, without any prompting on our part. To say the truth, I have hardly been to a ball these three years. I saw the head of the stair at H. E.'s the T—— Ambassador in Br——ne Square, the other night, but retired without even getting a sight of, or making my bow to, Her Excellency; thinking wisely that *mon lait de poule et mon bonnet de nuit* much better became me at that hour of midnight than the draught in a crowded passage, and the sight of ever so many beauties.

But though I don't go myself to these assemblies, I have intelligence amongst people who go: and hear from the girls and their mammas what they do, and how they enjoy themselves. I must own that some of the new arrangements please me very much, as being natural and simple, and, in so far, superior to the old mode.

In my time, for instance, a ball-room used to be more than half-filled with old male and female fogies, whose persons took up a great deal of valuable room, who did not in the least ornament the walls against which they stood, and who would have been much better at home in bed. In a great country-house, where you have a hall fireplace in which an ox might be roasted conveniently, the presence of a few score more or less of stout old folks can make no difference; there is room for them at the card-tables, and round the supper-board, and the sight of their honest red faces and white

waist-coats lining the wall cheers and illuminates the Assembly Room.

But it is a very different case when you have a small house in May Fair, or in the pleasant district of Pimlico and Tyburn; and accordingly I am happy to hear that the custom is rapidly spreading of asking none but dancing people to balls. It was only this morning that I was arguing the point with our cousin Mrs. Crowder, who was greatly irate because her daughter Fanny had received an invitation to go with her aunt Mrs. Timmins, to Lady Tutbury's ball, whereas poor Mrs. Crowder had been told that she could on no account get a card.

Now Blanche Crowder is a very large woman naturally, and with the present fashion of flounces in dress, this balloon of a creature would occupy the best part of a little back drawing-room; whereas Rosa Timmins is a little bit of a thing, who takes up no space at all, and furnishes the side of a room as prettily

as a bank of flowers could. I tried to convince our cousin upon this point, this *embonpoint*, I may say, and of course being too polite to make remarks personal to Mrs. Crowder, I playfully directed them elsewhere.

"Dear Blanche," said I, "don't you see how greatly Lady Tutbury would have to extend her premises if all the relatives of all her dancers were to be invited? She has already flung out a marquée over the leads, and actually included the cistern — what can she do more? If all the girls were to have chaperons, where could the elders sit? Tutbury himself will not be present. He is a large and roomy man, like your humble servant, and Lady Tut has sent him off to Greenwich, or the 'Star and Garter' for the night, where, I have no doubt, he and some other stout fellows will make themselves comfortable. At a ball amongst persons of moderate means and large acquaintance in London, room is much more precious than almost anybody's company, except that of

the beauties and the dancers. Look at Lord Trampleton, that enormous hulking monster (who nevertheless dances beautifully, as all big men do), when he takes out his favorite partner, Miss Wirledge, to polk, his arm, as he whisks her round and round, forms radii of a circle of very considerable diameter. He almost wants a room to himself. Young men and women now, when they dance, dance really; it is no lazy sauntering, as of old, but downright hard work — after which they want air and refreshment. How can they get the one, when the rooms are filled with elderly folks; or the other, when we are squeezing round the supper-tables, and drinking up all the available champagne and seltzer-water? No, no; the present plan, which I hear is becoming general, is admirable for London. Let there be half a dozen of good, active, bright-eyed chaperons and duennas, little women, who are more active, and keep a better lookout than your languishing voluptuous beauties" (I said

this casting at the same time a look of peculiar tenderness towards Blanche Crowder); "let them keep watch and see that all is right — that the young men don't dance too often with the same girl, or disappear on to the balcony, and that sort of thing; let them have good large roomy family coaches to carry the young women home to their mammas. In a word, at a ball, let there be for the future no admittance except upon business. In all the affairs of London life, that is the rule, depend upon it."

"And pray who told you, Mr. Brown, that I did n't wish to dance myself?" says Blanche, surveying her great person in the looking-glass (which could scarcely contain it) and flouncing out of the room; and I actually believe that the unconscionable creature, at her age and size, is still thinking that she is a fairy, and that the young fellows would like to dance round the room with her. Ah, Bob! I remember that grotesque woman a slim and graceful

girl. I remember others tender and beautiful, whose bright eyes glitter, and whose sweet voices whisper no more. So they pass away — youth and beauty, love and innocence, pass away and perish. I think of one now whom I remember the fairest and the gayest, the kindest and the purest; her laughter was music — I can hear it still, though it will never echo any more. Far away the silent tomb closes over her. Other roses than those of our prime grow up and bloom, and have their day. Honest youth, generous youth, may yours be as pure and as fair!

I did not think, when I began to write it, that the last sentence would have finished so; but life is not altogether jocular, Mr. Bob, and one comes upon serious thoughts suddenly as upon a funeral in the street. Let us go back to the business we are upon, namely, balls, whereof it, perhaps, has struck you that your uncle has very little to say.

I saw one announced in the morning fashion-

able print to-day, with a fine list of some of the greatest folks in London, and had previously heard from various quarters how eager many persons were to attend it, and how splendid an entertainment it was to be. And so the morning paper announced that Mrs. Hornby Madox threw open her house in So-and-so Street, and was assisted in receiving her guests by Lady Fugleman.

Now this is a sort of entertainment and arrangement than which I confess I can conceive nothing more queer, though I believe it is by no means uncommon in English society. Mrs. Hornby Madox comes into her fortune of ten thousand a year — wishes to be presented in the London world, having lived in the country previously — spares no expense to make her house and festival as handsome as may be, and gets Lady Fugleman to ask the company for her — not the honest Hornbys, not the family Madoxes, not the jolly old squires and friends and relatives of her family, and from her

county; but the London dandies and the London society: whose names you see chronicled at every party, and who, being Lady Fugleman's friends, are invited by her Ladyship to Mrs. Hornby's house.

What a strange notion of society does this give — of friendship, of fashion, of what people will do to be in the fashion! Poor Mrs. Hornby comes into her fortune, and says to her old friends and family, "My good people, I am going to cut every one of you. You were very well as long as we were in the country, where I might have my natural likings and affections. But henceforth I am going to let Lady Fugleman choose my friends for me. I know nothing about you any more. I have no objection to you, but if you want to know me you must ask Lady Fugleman; if she says yes, I shall be delighted; if no, *bon jour*."

This strange business goes on daily in London. Honest people do it, and think not the least harm. The proudest and noblest do not

think they demean themselves by crowding to Mrs. Goldcalf's parties, and strike quite openly a union between her wealth and their titles, to determine as soon as the former ceases. There is not the least hypocrisy about this at any rate — the terms of the bargain are quite understood on every hand.

But oh, Bob! see what an awful thing it is to confess, and would not even hypocrisy be better than this daring cynicism, this open heartlessness — Godlessness I had almost called it? Do you mean to say, you great folks, that your object in society is not love, is not friendship, is not family union and affection — is not truth and kindness; — is not generous sympathy and union of Christian (pardon me the word, but I can indicate my meaning by no other) — of Christian men and women, parents and children, — but that you assemble and meet together, not caring or trying to care for one another, — without a pretext of goodwill — with a daring selfishness openly avowed?

I am sure I wish Mrs. Goldcalf or the other lady no harm, and have never spoken to, or set eyes on, either of them, and I do not mean to say, Mr. Robert, that you and I are a whit better than they are, and doubt whether they have made the calculation for themselves of the consequences of what they are doing. But as sure as two and two make four, a person giving up of his own accord his natural friends and relatives, for the sake of the fashion, seems to me to say, I acknowledge myself to be heartless; I turn my back on my friends, I disown my relatives, and I dishonor my father and mother.

XI

A Word about Dinners.

ENGLISH Society, my beloved Bob, has this eminent advantage over all other — that is, if there be any society left in the wretched, distracted old European continent — that it is above all others a dinner-giving society. A people like the Germans, that dines habitually, and with what vast appetite I need not say, at one o'clock in the afternoon — like the Italians, that spends its evenings in opera-boxes — like the French, that amuses itself of nights with *eau sucrée* and intrigue — cannot, believe me, understand Society rightly. I love and admire my nation for its good sense, its manliness, its friendliness, its morality in the main — and these, I take it,

are all expressed in that noble institution, the dinner.

The dinner is the happy end of the Briton's day. We work harder than the other nations of the earth. We do more, we live more in our time, than Frenchmen or Germans. Every great man amongst us likes his dinner, and takes to it kindly. I could mention the most august names of poets, statesmen, philosophers, historians, judges, and divines, who are great at the dinner-table as in the field, the closet, the senate, or the bench. Gibbon mentions that he wrote the first two volumes of his history whilst a placeman in London, lodging in St. James's, going to the House of Commons, to the Club, and to dinner every day. The man flourishes under that generous and robust regimen; the healthy energies of society are kept up by it; our friendly intercourse is maintained; our intellect ripens with the good cheer, and throws off surprising crops, like the fields about Edinburgh, under

the influence of that admirable liquid, Claret. The best wines are sent to this country therefore; for no other deserves them as ours does.

I am a diner-out, and live in London. I protest, as I look back at the men and dinners I have seen in the last week, my mind is filled with manly respect and pleasure. How good they have been! how admirable the entertainments! how worthy the men!

Let me, without divulging names, and with a cordial gratitude, mention a few of those whom I have met, and who have all done their duty.

Sir, I have sat at table with a great, a world-renowned statesman. I watched him during the progress of the banquet — I am at liberty to say that he enjoyed it like a man.

On another day, it was a celebrated literary character. It was beautiful to see him at his dinner: cordial and generous, jovial and kindly, the great author enjoyed himself as

the great statesman — may he long give us good books and good dinners!

Yet another day, and I sat opposite to a Right Reverend Bishop. My Lord, I was pleased to see good thing after good thing disappear before you; and think no man ever better became that rounded episcopal apron. How amiable he was! how kind! He put water into his wine. Let us respect the moderation of the Church.

And then the men learned in the law: how they dine! what hospitality, what splendor, what comfort, what wine! As we walked away very gently in the moonlight, only three days since, from the ——'s, a friend of my youth and myself, we could hardly speak for gratitude: "Dear sir," we breathed fervently, "ask us soon again." One never has too much at those perfect banquets — no hideous headaches ensue, or horrid resolutions about adopting Revalenta Arabica for the future — but contentment with all the world, light slumber-

ing, joyful waking to grapple with the morrow's work. Ah, dear Bob, those lawyers have great merits. There is a dear old judge at whose family table if I could see you seated, my desire in life would be pretty nearly fulfilled. If you make yourself agreeable there, you will be in a fair way to get on in the world. But you are a youth still. Youths go to balls: men go to dinners.

Doctors, again, notoriously eat well; when my excellent friend Sangrado takes a bumper, and saying, with a shrug and a twinkle of his eye, "*Video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*," tosses off the wine, I always ask the butler for a glass of that bottle.

The inferior clergy, likewise, dine very much and well. I don't know when I have been better entertained, as far as creature comforts go, than by men of very Low Church principles; and one of the very best repasts that ever I saw in my life was at Darlington, given by a Quaker.

Some of the best wine in London is given to his friends by a poet of my acquaintance. All artists are notoriously fond of dinners, and invite you, but not so profusely. Newspaper-editors delight in dinners on Saturdays, and give them, thanks to the present position of Literature, very often and good. Dear Bob, I have seen the mahoganies of many men.

Every evening between seven and eight o'clock, I like to look at the men dressed for dinner, perambulating the western districts of our city. I like to see the smile on their countenances lighted up with an indescribable self-importance and good-humor; the askance glances which they cast at the little street-boys and foot-passengers who eye their shiny boots; the dainty manner in which they trip over the pavement on those boots, eschewing the mud-pools and dirty crossings; the refreshing whiteness of their linen; the coaxing twiddle which they give to the ties of their white chokers —

the caress of a fond parent to an innocent child.

I like walking myself. Those who go in cabs or broughams, I have remarked, have not the same radiant expression which the pedestrian exhibits. A man in his own brougham has anxieties about the stepping of his horse, or the squaring of the groom's elbows, or a doubt whether Jones's turn-out is not better; or whether something is not wrong in the springs; or whether he shall have the brougham out if the night is rainy. They always look tragical behind the glasses. A cab diner-out has commonly some cares, lest his sense of justice should be injured by the overcharge of the driver (these fellows are not uncommonly exorbitant in their demands upon gentlemen whom they set down at good houses); lest the smell of tobacco left by the last occupants of the vehicle (five medical students, let us say, who have chartered the vehicle, and smoked cheroots from the London University to the

play-house in the Haymarket) should infest the clothes of Tom Lavender, who is going to Lady Rosemary's; lest straws should stick unobserved to the glutinous lustre of his boots —his shiny ones, and he should appear in Dives's drawing-room like a poet with a *tenui avenâ*, or like Mad Tom in the play. I hope, my dear Bob, if a straw should ever enter a drawing-room in the wake of your boot, you will not be much disturbed in mind. Hark ye, in confidence: I have seen ——[1] in a hack-cab. There is no harm in employing one. There is no harm in anything natural, any more.

I cannot help here parenthetically relating a story which occurred in my own youth, in the year 1815, at the time when I first made my own *entrée* into society (for everything must have a beginning, Bob; and though we

[1] Mr. Brown's MS. here contains a name of such prodigious dignity out of the "P–r–ge," that we really do not dare to print it.

have been gentlemen long before the Conqueror, and have always consorted with gentlemen, yet we had not always attained that *haute volée* of fashion which has distinguished some of us subsequently) ; I recollect, I say, in 1815, when the Marquis of Sweetbread was good enough to ask me and the late Mr. Ruffles to dinner, to meet Prince Schwartzenberg and the Hetman Platoff. Ruffles was a man a good deal about town in those days, and certainly in very good society.

I was myself a young one, and thought Ruffles was rather inclined to patronize me: which I did not like. "I would have you to know, Mr. Ruffles," thought I, "that, after all, a gentleman can but be a gentleman; that though we Browns have no handles to our names, we are quite as well-bred as some folks who possess those ornaments" — and in fine I determined to give him a lesson. So when he called for me in the hackney-coach at my lodgings in Swallow Street, and we had driven

under the porte-cochère of Sweetbread House, where two tall and powdered domestics in the uniform of the Sweetbreads, viz., a spinach-colored coat, with waistcoat and the rest of delicate yellow or melted-butter color, opened the doors of the hall — what do you think, sir, I did? In the presence of these gentlemen, who were holding on at the door, I offered to toss up with Ruffles, heads or tails, who should pay for the coach; and then purposely had a dispute with the poor Jarvey about the fare. Ruffles's face of agony during this transaction I shall never forget. Sir, it was like the Laocoön. Drops of perspiration trembled on his pallid brow, and he flung towards me looks of imploring terror that would have melted an ogre. A better fellow than Ruffles never lived — he is dead long since, and I don't mind owning to this harmless little deceit.

A person of some note — a favorite Snob of mine — I am told, when he goes to dinner, adopts what he considers a happy artifice, and

sends his cab away at the corner of the street; so that the gentleman in livery may not behold its number, or that the lord with whom he dines, and about whom he is always talking, may not be supposed to know that Mr. Smith came in a hack-cab.

A man who is troubled with a shame like this, Bob, is unworthy of any dinner at all. Such a man must needs be a sneak and a humbug, anxious about the effect which he is to produce: uneasy in his mind: a donkey in a lion's skin: a small pretender — distracted by doubts and frantic terrors of what is to come next. Such a man can be no more at ease in his chair at dinner than a man is in the fauteuil at the dentist's (unless indeed he go to the admirable Mr. Gilbert in Suffolk Street, who is dragged into this essay for the benefit of mankind alone, and who, I vow, removes a grinder with so little pain that all the world should be made aware of him) — a fellow, I say, ashamed of the original from which he sprung, of the

cab in which he drives, awkward, therefore affected and unnatural, can never hope or deserve to succeed in society.

The great comfort of the society of great folks is, that they do not trouble themselves about your twopenny little person, as smaller persons do, but take you for what you are — a man kindly and good-natured, or witty and sarcastic, or learned and eloquent, or a good *raconteur*, or a very handsome man (and in '15 some of the Browns were — but I am speaking of five-and-thirty years ago), or an excellent gourmand and judge of wines — or what not. Nobody sets you so quickly at your ease as a fine gentleman. I have seen more noise made about a knight's lady than about the Duchess of Fitzbattleaxe herself: and Lady Mountararat, whose family dates from the Deluge, enters and leaves a room, with her daughters, the lovely Ladies Eve and Lilith D'Arc, with much less pretension and in much simpler capotes and what-do-you-call-'em's,

than Lady de Mogyns or Mrs. Shindy, who quit an assembly in a whirlwind as it were, with trumpets and alarums like a stage king and queen.

But my pen can run no further, for my paper is out, and it is time to dress for dinner.

XII

On some Old Customs of the Dinner-Table.

OF all the sciences which have made a progress in late years, I think, dear Bob (to return to the subject from which I parted with so much pleasure last week), that the art of dinner-giving has made the most delightful and rapid advances. Sir, I maintain, even now with a matured age and appetite, that the dinners of this present day are better than those we had in our youth, and I can't but be thankful at least once in every day for this decided improvement in our civilization. Those who remember the usages of five-and-twenty years back will be ready, I am sure, to acknowledge this progress. I was turning over at the Club yesterday a queer little book writ-

ten at that period, which, I believe, had some authority at the time, and which records some of those customs which obtained, if not in good London society, at least in some companies, and parts of our islands. Sir, many of these practices seem as antiquated now as the usages described in the accounts of Homeric feasts, or Queen Elizabeth's banquets and breakfasts. Let us be happy to think they are gone.

The book in question is called "The Maxims of Sir Morgan O'Doherty," a queer baronet, who appears to have lived in the first quarter of the century, and whose opinions the antiquarian may examine, not without profit — a strange barbarian indeed it is, and one wonders that such customs should ever have been prevalent in our country.

Fancy such opinions as these having ever been holden by any set of men among us. Maxim 2. — "It is laid down in fashionable life that you must drink Champagne after

white cheeses, water after red. . . . Ale is to be avoided, in case a wet night is to be expected, as should cheese also." Maxim 4. — "A fine singer, after dinner, is to be avoided, for he is a great bore, and stops the wine. . . . One of the best rules (to put him down) is to applaud him most vociferously as soon as he has sung the first verse, as if all was over, and say to the gentleman farthest from you at table that you admire the conclusion of this song very much." Maxim 25. — "You meet people occasionally who tell you it is bad taste to give Champagne at dinner — Port and Teneriffe being such superior drinking," etc., etc. I am copying out of a book printed three months since, describing ways prevalent when you were born. Can it be possible, I say, that England was ever in such a state?

Was it ever a maxim in "fashionable life" that you were to drink champagne after white cheeses? What was that maxim in fashionable life about drinking and about cheese?

The maxim in fashionable life is to drink what you will. It is too simple now to trouble itself about wine or about cheese. Ale again is to be avoided, this strange Doherty says, if you expect a wet night — and in another place, he says, "The English drink a pint of porter at a draught." What English? gracious powers! Are we a nation of coalheavers? Do we ever have a wet night? Do we ever meet people occasionally who say that to give Champagne at dinner is bad taste, and that Port and Teneriffe are such superior drinking? Fancy Teneriffe, my dear boy — I say fancy a man asking you to drink Teneriffe at dinner; the mind shudders at it — he might as well invite you to swallow the Peak.

And then consider the maxim about the fine singer who is to be avoided! What! was there a time in most people's memory, when folks at dessert began to sing? I have heard such a thing at a tenants' dinner in the country; but the idea of a fellow beginning to

perform a song at a dinner-party in London fills my mind with terror and amazement; and I picture to myself any table which I frequent, in May Fair, in Bloomsbury, in Belgravia, or where you will, and the pain which would seize upon the host and the company if some wretch were to commence a song.

We have passed that savage period of life. We do not want to hear songs from guests, we have the songs done for us; as we don't want our ladies to go down into the kitchen and cook the dinner any more. The cook can do it better and cheaper. We do not desire feats of musical or culinary skill — but simple, quiet, easy, unpretending conversation.

In like manner, there was a practice once usual, and which still lingers here and there, of making complimentary speeches after dinner; that custom is happily almost entirely discontinued. Gentlemen do not meet to compliment each other profusely, or to make fine phrases. Simplicity gains upon us daily. Let

us be thankful that the florid style is disappearing.

I once shared a bottle of sherry with a commercial traveller at Margate who gave a toast or a sentiment as he filled every glass. He would not take his wine without this queer ceremony before it. I recollect one of his sentiments, which was as follows: "Year is to 'er that doubles our joys, and divides our sorrows — I give you woman, sir," — and we both emptied our glasses. These lumbering ceremonials are passing out of our manners, and were found only to obstruct our free intercourse. People can like each other just as much without orations, and be just as merry without being forced to drink against their will.

And yet there are certain customs to which one clings still; for instance, the practice of drinking wine with your neighbor, though wisely not so frequently indulged in as of old, yet still obtains, and I trust will never be

abolished. For though, in the old time, when Mr. and Mrs. Fogy had sixteen friends to dinner, it became an unsupportable *corvée* for Mr. F. to ask sixteen persons to drink wine, and a painful task for Mrs. Fogy to be called upon to bow to ten gentlemen, who desired to have the honor to drink her health, yet, employed in moderation, that ancient custom of challenging your friends to drink is a kindly and hearty old usage, and productive of many most beneficial results.

I have known a man of a modest and reserved turn (just like your old uncle, dear Bob, as no doubt you were going to remark), when asked to drink by the host, suddenly lighten up, toss off his glass, get confidence, and begin to talk right and left. He wanted but the spur to set him going. It is supplied by the butler at the back of his chair.

It sometimes happens, again, that a host's conversational powers are not brilliant. I own that I could point out a few such whom I have

the honor to name among my friends — gentlemen, in fact, who wisely hold their tongues because they have nothing to say which is worth the hearing or the telling, and properly confine themselves to the carving of the mutton and the ordering of the wines. Such men, manifestly, should always be allowed, nay encouraged, to ask their guests to take wine. In putting that question, they show their goodwill, and cannot possibly betray their mental deficiency. For example, let us suppose Jones, who has been perfectly silent all dinner-time, oppressed, doubtless, by that awful Lady Tiara, who sits swelling on his right hand, suddenly rallies, singles me out, and with a loud cheering voice cries, "Brown, my boy, a glass of wine." I reply, "With pleasure, my dear Jones." He responds as quick as thought, "Shall it be hock or champagne, Brown?" I mention the wine which I prefer. He calls to the butler, and says, "Some champagne or hock" (as the case may be, for I don't choose

to commit myself), — "some champagne or hock to Mr. Brown;" and finally he says "Good health!" in a pleasant tone. Thus you see, Jones, though not a conversationist, has had the opportunity of making no less than four observations, which, if not brilliant or witty, are yet manly, sensible, and agreeable. And I defy any man in the metropolis, be he the most accomplished, the most learned, the wisest, or the most eloquent, to say more than Jones upon a similar occasion.

If you have had a difference with a man, and are desirous to make it up, how pleasant it is to take wine with him. Nothing is said but that simple phrase which has just been uttered by my friend Jones; and yet it means a great deal. The cup is a symbol of reconciliation. The other party drinks up your good-will as you accept his token of returning friendship — and thus the liquor is hallowed which Jones has paid for; and I like to think that the grape which grew by Rhine or Rhone

was born and ripened under the sun there, so as to be the means of bringing two good fellows together. I once heard the head physician of a Hydropathic establishment on the sunny banks of the first-named river, give the health of His Majesty the King of Prussia, and, calling upon the company to receive that august toast with a "donnerndes Lebehoch," toss off a bumper of sparkling water. It did not seem to me a genuine enthusiasm. No, no, let us have toast and wine, not toast and water. It was not in vain that grapes grew on the hills of Father Rhine.

One seldom asks ladies now to take wine, — except when, in a confidential whisper to the charming creature whom you have brought down to dinner, you humbly ask permission to pledge her, and she delicately touches her glass, with a fascinating smile, in reply to your glance, — a smile, you rogue, which goes to your heart. I say, one does not ask ladies any more to take wine: and I think, this custom

being abolished, the contrary practice should be introduced, and that the ladies should ask the gentlemen. I know one who did, *une grande dame de par le monde*, as honest Brantome phrases it, and from whom I deserved no such kindness; but, sir, the effect of that graceful act of hospitality was such, that she made a grateful slave forever of one who was an admiring rebel previously, who would do anything to show his gratitude, and who now knows no greater delight than when he receives a card which bears her respected name.[1]

A dinner of men is well now and again, but few well-regulated minds relish a dinner without women. There are some wretches who, I believe, still meet together for the sake of what is called "the spread," who dine each other round and round, and have horrid delights in turtle, early pease, and other culinary luxuries

[1] Upon my word, Mr. Brown, this is too broad a hint. — *Punch.*

— but I pity the condition as I avoid the banquets of those men. The only substitute for ladies at dinners, or consolation for want of them, is — smoking. Cigars, introduced with the coffee, do, if anything can, make us forget the absence of the other sex. But what a substitute is that for her who doubles our joys, and divides our griefs! for woman! as my friend the Traveller said.

XIII

Great and Little Dinners.

IT has been said, dear Bob, that I have seen the mahoganies of many men, and it is with no small feeling of pride and gratitude that I am enabled to declare also, that I hardly remember in my life to have had a bad dinner. Would to heaven that all mortal men could say likewise! Indeed, and in the presence of so much want and misery as pass under our ken daily, it is with a feeling of something like shame and humiliation that I make the avowal; but I have robbed no man of his meal that I know of, and am here speaking of very humble as well as very grand banquets, the which I maintain are, when there is a sufficiency, almost always good.

Yes, all dinners are good, from a shilling

upwards. The plate of boiled beef which Mary, the neat-handed waitress, brings or used to bring you in the Old Bailey — I say used, for, ah me! I speak of years long past, when the cheeks of Mary were as blooming as the carrots which she brought up with the beef, and she may be a grandmother by this time, or a pallid ghost, far out of the regions of beef; — from the shilling dinner of beef and carrots to the grandest banquet of the season — everything is good. There are no degrees in eating. I mean that mutton is as good as venison — beefsteak, if you are hungry, as good as turtle — bottled ale, if you like it, to the full as good as champagne; — there is no delicacy in the world which Monsieur Francatelli or Monsieur Soyer can produce, which I believe to be better than toasted cheese. I have seen a dozen of epicures at a grand table forsake every French and Italian delicacy for boiled leg of pork and pease-pudding. You can but be hungry, and eat and be happy.

What is the moral I would deduce from this truth, if truth it be? I would have a great deal more hospitality practised than is common among us — more hospitality and less show. Properly considered, the quality of dinner is twice blest: it blesses him that gives, and him that takes: a dinner with friendliness is the best of all friendly meetings — a pompous entertainment where no love is, the least satisfactory.

Why, then, do we of the middle classes persist in giving entertainments so costly, and beyond our means? This will be read by many mortals, who are aware that they live on leg of mutton themselves, or worse than this, have what are called meat teas, than which I cannot conceive a more odious custom; that ordinarily they are very sober in their way of life; that they like in reality that leg of mutton better than the condiments of that doubtful French artist who comes from the pastry-cook's, and presides over the mysterious

stewpans in the kitchen; why, then, on their company dinners, should they flare up in the magnificent manner in which they universally do?

Everybody has the same dinner in London, and the same soup, saddle of mutton, boiled fowls and tongue, *entrées*, champagne, and so forth. I own myself to being no better nor worse than my neighbors in this respect, and rush off to the confectioners' for sweets, etc.; hire sham butlers and attendants; have a fellow going round the table with still and dry champagne, as if I knew his name, and it was my custom to drink those wines every day of my life. I am as bad as my neighbors: but why are we so bad, I ask? — why are we not more reasonable?

If we receive very great men or ladies at our houses, I will lay a wager that they will select mutton and gooseberry tart for their dinner: forsaking the *entrées* which the men in white Berlin gloves are handing round in

the Birmingham plated dishes. Asking lords and ladies, who have great establishments of their own, to French dinners and delicacies, is like inviting a grocer to a meal of figs, or a pastry-cook to a banquet of raspberry tarts. They have had enough of them. And great folks, if they like you, take no count of your feasts, and grand preparations, and can but eat mutton like men.

One cannot have sumptuary laws nowadays, or restrict the gastronomical more than any other trade: but I wish a check could be put upon our dinner extravagances by some means, and am confident that the pleasures of life would greatly be increased by moderation. A man might give two dinners for one, according to the present pattern. Half your money is swallowed up in a dessert, which nobody wants in the least, and which I always grudge to see arriving at the end of plenty. Services of culinary kickshaws swallow up money, and give nobody pleasure except the

pastry-cook, whom they enrich. Everybody entertains as if he had three or four thousand a year.

Some one with a voice potential should cry out against this overwhelming luxury. What is mere decency in a very wealthy man is absurdity — nay, wickedness, in a poor one: a frog by nature, I am an insane, silly creature, to attempt to swell myself to the size of the ox, my neighbor. Oh, that I could establish in the middle classes of London an Anti-*entrée* and Anti-Dessert movement! I would go down to posterity not ill-deserving of my country in such a case, and might be ranked among the social benefactors. Let us have a meeting at Willis's Rooms, Ladies and Gentlemen, for the purpose, and get a few philanthropists, philosophers, and bishops, or so, to speak! As people, in former days, refused to take sugar, let us get up a society which shall decline to eat dessert and made dishes.[1]

[1] Mr. Brown here enumerates three *entrées*, which he con-

In this way, I say every man who now gives a dinner might give two; and take in a host of poor friends and relatives, who are now excluded from his hospitality. For dinners are given mostly in the middle classes by way of revenge; and Mr. and Mrs. Thompson ask Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, because the latter have asked them. A man at this rate who gives four dinners of twenty persons in the course of the season, each dinner costing him something very near upon thirty pounds, receives in return, we will say, forty dinners from the friends whom he has himself invited. That is, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson pay a hundred and twenty pounds, as do all their friends, for forty-four dinners of which they partake. So that they may calculate that every time they dine with their respected friends, they pay about twenty-eight shillings per *tête*. What a

fesses he can*not* resist, and likewise preserved cherries at dessert: but the principle is good, though the man is weak.

sum this is, dear Johnson, for you and me to spend upon our waistcoats! What does poor Mrs. Johnson care for all these garish splendors, who has had her dinner at two with her dear children in the nursery? Our custom is not hospitality or pleasure, but to be able to cut off a certain number of acquaintance from the dining list.

One of these dinners of twenty, again, is scarcely ever pleasant as far as regards society. You may chance to get near a pleasant neighbor and neighboress, when your corner of the table is possibly comfortable. But there can be no general conversation. Twenty people cannot engage together in talk. You would want a speaking-trumpet to communicate from your place by the lady of the house (for I wish to give my respected reader the place of honor) to the lady at the opposite corner at the right of the host. If you have a joke or a *mot* to make, you cannot utter it before such a crowd. A joke is nothing which can only

get a laugh out of a third part of the company. The most eminent wags of my acquaintance are dumb in these great parties; and your *raconteur* or story-teller, if he is prudent, will invariably hold his tongue. For what can be more odious than to be compelled to tell a story at the top of your voice, to be called on to repeat it for the benefit of a distant person who has only heard a part of the anecdote? There are stories of mine which would fail utterly, were they narrated in any but an undertone; others in which I laugh, am overcome by emotion, and so forth — what I call my *intimes* stories. Now it is impossible to do justice to these except in the midst of a general hush, and in a small circle; so that I am commonly silent. And as no anecdote is positively new in a party of twenty, the chances are so much against you that somebody should have heard the story before, in which case you are done.

In these large assemblies, a wit, then, is of

no use, and does not have a chance: a *raconteur* does not get a fair hearing, and both of these real ornaments of a dinner-table are thus utterly thrown away. I have seen Jack Jolliffe, who can keep a table of eight or ten persons in a roar of laughter for four hours, remain utterly mute in a great entertainment, smothered by the numbers and the dowager on each side of him; and Tom Yarnold, the most eminent of conversationists, sit through a dinner as dumb as the footman behind him. They do not care to joke, unless there is a sympathizing society, and prefer to be silent rather than throw their good things away.

What I would recommend, then, with all my power, is that dinners should be more simple, more frequent, and should contain fewer persons. Ten is the utmost number that a man of moderate means should ever invite to his table; although in a great house, managed by a great establishment, the case may be different. A man and woman may look as if

they were glad to see ten people: but in a great dinner they abdicate their position as host and hostess — are mere creatures in the hands of the sham butlers, sham footmen, and tall confectioners' emissaries who crowd the room, — and are guests at their own table, where they are helped last, and of which they occupy the top and bottom. I have marked many a lady watching with timid glances the large artificial *major-domo*, who officiates for that night only, and thought to myself, "Ah, my dear madam, how much happier might we all be if there were but half the splendor, half the made dishes, and half the company assembled."

If any dinner-giving person who reads this shall be induced by my representations to pause in his present career, to cut off some of the luxuries of his table, and instead of giving one enormous feast to twenty persons to have three simple dinners for ten, my dear Nephew will not have been addressed in vain. Every-

body will be bettered; and while the guests will be better pleased, and more numerous, the host will actually be left with money in his pocket.

XIV

On Love, Marriage, Men, and Women—i.

BOB BROWN is in love, then, and undergoing the common lot! And so, my dear lad, you are this moment enduring the delights and tortures, the jealousy and wakefulness, the longing and raptures, the frantic despair and elation, attendant upon the passion of love. In the year 1812 (it was before I contracted my alliance with your poor dear Aunt, who never caused me any of the disquietudes above enumerated) I myself went through some of these miseries and pleasures which you now, O my Nephew, are enduring. I pity and sympathize with you. I am an old cock now, with a feeble strut and a faltering crow. But I was young once: and remember

the time very well. Since that time, *amavi amantes:* if I see two young people happy, I like it, as I like to see children enjoying a pantomime. I have been the confidant of numbers of honest fellows, and the secret watcher of scores of little pretty intrigues in life. Miss Y., I know why you go so eagerly to balls now, and Mr. Z., what has set you off dancing at your mature age. Do you fancy, Mrs. Alpha, that I believe you walk every day at half-past eleven by the Serpentine for nothing, and that I don't see young O'Mega in Rotten Row? . . . And so, my poor Bob, you are shot.

If you lose the object of your desires, the loss won't kill you; you may set that down as a certainty. If you win, it is possible that you will be disappointed; that point also is to be considered. But hit or miss, good luck or bad — I should be sorry, my honest Bob, that thou didst not undergo the malady. Every man ought to be in love a few times in his life, and

to have a smart attack of the fever. You are better for it when it is over: the better for your misfortune if you endure it with a manly heart; how much the better for success if you win it and a good wife into the bargain! Ah! Bob — there is a stone in the burying-ground at Funchal which I often and often think of — many hopes and passions lie beneath it, along with the fairest, gentlest creature in the world — it's not Mrs. Brown that lies there. After life's fitful fever, she sleeps in Marylebone burying-ground, poor dear soul! Emily Blenkinsop *might* have been Mrs. Brown, but — but let us change the subject.

Of course you will take advice, my dear Bob, about your flame. All men and women do. It is notorious that they listen to the opinions of all their friends, and never follow their own counsel. Well, tell us about this girl. What are her qualifications, expectations, belongings, station in life, and so forth?

About beauty I do not argue. I take it for granted. A man sees beauty, or that which he likes, with eyes entirely his own. I don't say that plain women get husbands as readily as the pretty girls — but so many handsome girls are unmarried, and so many of the other sort wedded, that there is no possibility of establishing a rule, or of setting up a standard. Poor dear Mrs. Brown was a far finer woman than Emily Blenkinsop, and yet I loved Emily's little finger more than the whole hand which your Aunt Martha gave me — I see the plainest women exercising the greatest fascinations over men, — in fine, a man falls in love with a woman because it is fate, because she is a woman; Bob, too, is a man, and endowed with a heart and a beard.

Is she a clever woman? I do not mean to disparage you, my good fellow, but you are not a man that is likely to set the Thames on fire; and I should rather like to see you fall to the lot of a clever woman. A set has been

made against clever women in all times. Take all Shakespeare's heroines — they all seem to me pretty much the same — affectionate, motherly, tender, that sort of thing. Take Scott's ladies, and other writers' — each man seems to draw from one model — an exquisite slave is what we want for the most part; a humble, flattering, smiling, child-loving, tea-making, pianoforte-playing being, who laughs at our jokes, however old they may be, coaxes and wheedles us in our humors, and fondly lies to us through life. I never could get your poor Aunt into this system, though I confess I should have been a happier man had she tried it.

There are many more clever women in the world than men think for. Our habit is to despise them; we believe they do not think because they do not contradict us; and are weak because they do not struggle and rise up against us. A man only begins to know women as he grows old; and for my part my opinion of their cleverness rises every day.

When I say I know women, I mean I know that I don't know them. Every single woman I ever knew is a puzzle to me, as I have no doubt she is to herself. Say they are not clever? Their hypocrisy is a perpetual marvel to me, and a constant exercise of cleverness of the finest sort. You see a demure-looking woman perfect in all her duties, constant in house-bills and shirt-buttons, obedient to her lord, and anxious to please him in all things; silent when you and he talk politics, or literature, or balderdash together, and if referred to, saying, with a smile of perfect humility, "Oh, women are not judges upon such and such matters; we leave learning and politics to men." "Yes, poor Polly," says Jones, patting the back of Mrs. J.'s head good-naturedly, "attend to the house, my dear; that's the best thing you can do, and leave the rest to us." Benighted idiot! She has long ago taken your measure and your friends'; she knows your weaknesses, and ministers to them in a

thousand artful ways. She knows your obstinate points, and marches round them with the most curious art and patience, as you will see an ant on a journey turn round an obstacle. Every woman manages her husband: every person who manages another is a hypocrite. Her smiles, her submission, her good-humor, for all which we value her, — what are they but admirable duplicity? We expect falseness from her, and order and educate her to be dishonest. Should he upbraid, I'll own that he prevail; say that he frown, I'll answer with a smile; — what are these but lies, that we exact from our slaves? — lies, the dexterous performance of which we announce to be the female virtues: brutal Turks that we are! I do not say that Mrs. Brown ever obeyed me — on the contrary: but I should have liked it, for I am a Turk like my neighbor.

I will instance your mother now. When my brother comes in to dinner after a bad day's sport, or after looking over the bills of

some of you boys, he naturally begins to be surly with your poor dear mother, and to growl at the mutton. What does she do? She may be hurt, but she does n't show it. She proceeds to coax, to smile, to turn the conversation, to stroke down Bruin, and get him in a good-humor. She sets him on his old stories, and she and all the girls — poor dear little Sapphiras! — set off laughing; there is that story about the Goose walking into church, which your father tells and your mother and sisters laugh at, until I protest I am so ashamed that I hardly know where to look. On he goes with that story time after time: and your poor mother sits there and knows that I know she is a humbug, and laughs on; and teaches all the girls to laugh too. Had that dear creature been born to wear a nose-ring and bangles instead of a muff and bonnet, and had she a brown skin in the place of that fair one with which nature has endowed her, she would have done Suttee, after your brown Brahmin father

had died, and thought women very irreligious too, who refused to roast themselves for their masters and lords. I do not mean to say that the late Mrs. Brown would have gone through the process of incremation for me — far from it: by a timely removal she was spared from the grief which her widowhood would have doubtless caused her, and I acquiesce in the decrees of Fate in this instance, and have not the least desire to have preceded her.

I hope the ladies will not take my remarks in ill part. If I die for it, I must own that I don't think they have fair play. In the bargain we make with them I don't think they get their rights. And as a laborer notoriously does more by the piece than he does by the day, and a free man works harder than a slave, so I doubt whether we get the most out of our women by enslaving them as we do by law and custom. There are some folks who would limit the range of women's duties to little more than a kitchen range — others who like them to ad-

minister to our delectation in a ball-room, and permit them to display dimpled shoulders and flowing ringlets — just as you have one horse for a mill, and another for the Park. But in whatever way we like them, it is for our use somehow that we have women brought up; to work for us, or to shine for us, or to dance for us, or what not? It would not have been thought shame of our fathers fifty years ago, that they could not make a custard or a pie, but our mothers would have been rebuked had they been ignorant on these matters. Why should not you and I be ashamed now because we cannot make our own shoes, or cut out our own breeches? We know better: we can get cobblers and tailors to do that — and it was we who made the laws for women, who, we are in the habit of saying, are not so clever as we are.

My dear Nephew, as I grow old and consider these things, I know which are the stronger, men or women; but which are the cleverer, I doubt.

XV

On Love, Marriage, Men, and Women—ii.

LONG years ago, indeed it was at the peace of Amiens, when with several other young bucks I was making the grand tour, I recollect how sweet we all of us were upon the lovely Duchess of Montepulciano at Naples, who, to be sure, was not niggardly of her smiles in return. There came a man amongst us, however, from London, a very handsome young fellow, with such an air of fascinating melancholy in his looks, that he cut out all the other suitors of the Duchess in the course of a week, and would have married her very likely, but that war was declared while this youth was still hankering about his Princess, and he was sent off to Verdun, whence he did not emerge for

twelve years, and until he was as fat as a porpoise, and the Duchess was long since married to General Count Raff, one of the Emperor's heroes.

I mention poor Tibbits to show the curious difference of manner which exists among us; and which, though not visible to foreigners, is instantly understood by English people. Brave, clever, tall, slim, dark, and sentimental-looking, he passed muster in the foreign saloon, and, as I must own to you, cut us fellows out: whereas we English knew instantly that the man was not well bred, by a thousand little signs not to be understood by the foreigner. In his early youth, for instance, he had been cruelly deprived of his *h*'s by his parents, and though he tried to replace them in after life, they were no more natural than a glass eye, but stared at you as it were in a ghastly manner out of the conversation, and pained you by their horrid intrusions. Not acquainted with these refinements of our language, foreign-

ers did not understand what Tibbits's errors were, and doubtless thought it was from envy that we conspired to slight the poor fellow.

I mention Mr. Tibbits, because he was handsome, clever, honest, and brave, and in almost all respects our superior; and yet labored under disadvantages of manner which unfitted him for certain society. It is not Tibbits the man, it is not Tibbits the citizen, of whom I would wish to speak lightly; his morals, his reading, his courage, his generosity, his talents are undoubted — it is the social Tibbits of whom I speak: and as I do not go to balls, because I do not dance, or to meetings of the Political Economy Club, or other learned associations, because taste and education have not fitted me for the pursuits for which other persons are adapted, so Tibbits's sphere is not in drawing-rooms, where the *h*, and other points of etiquette, are rigorously maintained.

I say thus much because one or two people have taken some remarks of mine in ill part,

and hinted that I am a Tory in disguise: and an aristocrat that should be hung up to a lamp-post. Not so, dear Bob; — there is nothing like the truth, about whomsoever it may be. I mean no more disrespect towards any fellow-man by saying that he is not what is called in Society well bred, than by stating that he is not tall or short, or that he cannot dance, or that he does not know Hebrew, or whatever the case may be. I mean that if a man works with a pickaxe or shovel all day, his hands will be harder than those of a lady of fashion, and that his opinion about Madame Sontag's singing, or the last new novel, will not probably be of much value. And though I own my conviction that there are some animals which frisk advantageously in ladies' drawing-rooms, whilst others pull stoutly at the plough, I do not most certainly mean to reflect upon a horse for not being a lap-dog, or see that he has any cause to be ashamed that he is other than a horse.

And, in a word, as you are what is called a gentleman yourself, I hope that Mrs. Bob Brown, whoever she may be, is not only by nature, but by education, a gentlewoman. No man ought ever to be called upon to blush for his wife. I see good men rush into marriage with ladies of whom they are afterwards ashamed; and in the same manner charming women linked to partners whose vulgarity they try to screen. Poor Mrs. Botibol, what a constant hypocrisy your life is, and how you insist upon informing everybody that Botibol is the best of men! Poor Jack Jinkins! what a female is that you brought back from Bagnigge Wells to introduce to London society! a handsome, tawdry, flaunting, watering-place belle; a boarding-house beauty: tremendous in brazen ornaments and cheap finery.

If you marry, dear Bob, I hope Mrs. Robert B. will be a lady not very much above or below your own station.

I would sooner that you should promote

your wife than that she should advance you. And though every man can point you out instances where his friends have been married to ladies of superior rank, who have accepted their new position with perfect grace, and made their husbands entirely happy; as there are examples of maid-servants decorating coronets, and sempstresses presiding worthily over Baronial Halls; yet I hope Mrs. Robert Brown will not come out of a palace or a kitchen: but out of a house something like yours, out of a family something like yours, with a snug jointure something like that modest portion which I dare say you will inherit.

I remember when Arthur Rowdy (who I need not tell you belongs to the firm of Stumpy, Rowdy & Co., of Lombard Street, Bankers) married Lady Cleopatra; what a grand match it was thought by the Rowdy family: and how old Mrs. Rowdy in Portman Square was elated at the idea of her son's new connection. Her daughters were to go to all the parties in

London; and her house was to be filled with the very greatest of great folks. We heard of nothing but dear Lady Stonehenge from morning till night; and the old frequenters of the house were perfectly pestered with stories of dear Lady Zenobia and dear Lady Cornelia, and of the dear Marquis, whose masterly translation of *Cornelius Nepos* had placed him among the most learned of our nobility.

When Rowdy went to live in May Fair, what a wretched house it was into which he introduced such of his friends as were thought worthy of presentation to his new society! The rooms were filled with young dandies of the Stonehenge connection — beardless bucks from Downing Street, gay young sprigs of the Guards — their sisters and mothers, their kith and kin. They overdrew their accounts at Rowdy's Bank, and laughed at him in his drawing-room; they made their bets and talked their dandy talk over his claret, at which the poor fellow sat quite silent. Lady Stonehenge

invaded his nursery, appointed and cashiered his governess and children's maids; established her apothecary in permanence over him; quarrelled with old Mrs. Rowdy, so that the poor old body was only allowed to see her grandchildren by stealth, and have secret interviews with them in the garden of Berkeley Square; made Rowdy take villas at Tunbridge, which she filled with her own family; massacred her daughter's visiting-book, in the which Lady Cleopatra, a good-natured woman, at first admitted some of her husband's relatives and acquaintance; and carried him abroad upon excursions, in which all he had to do was to settle the bills with the courier. And she went so far as to order him to change his side of the House and his politics, and adopt those of Lord Stonehenge, which were of the age of the Druids, his lordship's ancestors; but here the honest British merchant made a stand and conquered his mother-in-law, who would have smothered him the other day for voting for

Rothschild. If it were not for the Counting-House in the morning and the House of Commons at night, what would become of Rowdy? They say he smokes there, and drinks when he smokes. He has been known to go to Vauxhall, and has even been seen, with a comforter over his nose, listening to *Sam Hall* at the Cider Cellars. All this misery and misfortune came to the poor fellow for marrying out of his degree. The clerks at Lombard Street laugh when Lord Mistletoe steps out of his cab and walks into the bank-parlor; and Rowdy's private account invariably tells tales of the visit of his young scapegrace of a brother-in-law.

XVI

On Love, Marriage, Men, and Women — iii.

LET us now, beloved and ingenuous youth, take the other side of the question, and discourse a little while upon the state of that man who takes unto himself a wife inferior to him in degree. I have before me in my acquaintance many most pitiable instances of individuals who have made this fatal mistake.

Although old fellows are as likely to be made fools as young in love matters, and Dan Cupid has no respect for the most venerable age, yet I remark that it is generally the young men who marry vulgar wives. They are on a reading tour for the Long Vacation, they are quartered at Ballinafad, they see Miss Smith or Miss O'Shaughnessy every day, healthy,

lively, jolly girls with red cheeks, bright eyes, and high spirits — they come away at the end of the vacation, or when the regiment changes its quarters, engaged men; family rows ensue, mothers cry out, papas grumble, Miss pines and loses her health at Baymouth or Ballinafad — consent is got at last, Jones takes his degree, Jenkins gets his company; Miss Smith and Miss O'Shaughnessy become Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Jenkins.

For the first year it is all very well. Mrs. Jones is a great bouncing handsome creature, lavishly fond of her adored Jones, and caring for no other company but his. They have a cottage at Bayswater. He walks her out every evening. He sits and reads the last new novel to her whilst she works slippers for him, or makes some little tiny caps, and — dear Julia, dear Edward! — they are all in all to one another.

Old Mrs. Smith of course comes up from Swansea at the time when the little caps are

put into requisition, and takes possession of the cottage at Bayswater. Mrs. Jones Senior calls upon Mrs. Edward Jones's mamma, and, of course, is desirous to do everything that is civil to the family of Edward's wife.

Mrs. Jones finds in the mother-in-law of her Edward a large woman with a cotton umbrella, who dines in the middle of the day, and has her beer, and who calls Mrs. Jones Mum. What a state they are in in Pocklington Square about this woman! How can they be civil to her? Whom can they ask to meet her? How the girls, Edward's sisters, go on about her! Fanny says she ought to be shown to the housekeeper's room when she calls; Mary proposes that Mrs. Shay, the washer-woman, should be invited on the day when Mrs. Smith comes to dinner; and Emma (who was Edward's favorite sister, and who considers herself jilted by his marriage with Julia) points out the most dreadful thing of all, that Mrs. Smith and Julia are exactly

alike, and that in a few years Mrs. Edward Jones will be the very image of that great enormous unwieldy horrid old woman.

Closeted with her daughter, of whom and of her baby she has taken possession, Mrs. Smith gives her opinion about the Joneses: They may be very good, but they are too fine ladies for *her;* and they evidently think she is not good enough for *them:* they are sad worldly people, and have never sat under a good minister, that is clear: they talked French before her on the day she called in Pocklington Gardens, "and though they were laughing at me, I 'm sure I can pardon them," Mrs. Smith says. Edward and Julia have a little altercation about the manner in which his family has treated Mrs. Smith, and Julia, bursting into tears as she clasps her child to her bosom, says, "My child, my child, will you be taught to be ashamed of your mother?"

Edward flings out of the room in a rage. It is true that Mrs. Smith is not fit to associate

with his family, and that her manners are not like theirs; that Julia's eldest brother, who is a serious tanner at Cardiff, is not a pleasant companion after dinner: and that it is not agreeable to be called "Ned" and "Old Cove" by her younger brother, who is an attorney's clerk in Gray's Inn, and favors Ned by asking him to lend him a "Sov.," and by coming to dinner on Sundays. It is true that the appearance of that youth at the first little party the Edward Joneses gave after their marriage, when Natty disgracefully inebriated himself, caused no little scandal amongst his friends, and much wrath on the part of old Jones, who said, "That little scamp call my daughters by their Christian names! — a little beggar that is not fit to sit down in my hall. If ever he dares to call at my house I'll tell Jobbins to fling a pail of water over him." And it is true that Natty called many times in Pocklington Square, and complained to Edward that he, Nat, could neither see his Mar

nor the Gurls, and that the old gent cut up uncommon stiff.

So you see Edward Jones has had his way, and got a handsome wife, but at what expense? He and his family are separated. His wife brought him nothing but good looks. Her stock of brains is small. She is not easy in the new society into which she has been brought, and sits quite mum both at the grand parties which the old Joneses give in Pocklington Square, and at the snug little entertainments which poor Edward Jones tries on his own part. The women of the Jones's set try her in every way, and can get no good from her: Jones's male friends, who are civilized beings, talk to her, and receive only monosyllables in reply. His house is a stupid one; his acquaintances drop off; he has no circle at all at last, except, to be sure, that increasing family circle which brings up old Mrs. Smith from Swansea every year.

What is the lot of a man at the end of a

dozen years who has a wife like this? She is handsome no longer, and she never had any other merit. He can't read novels to her all through his life, while she is working slippers — it is absurd. He can't be philandering in Kensington Gardens with a lady who does not walk out now except with two nursemaids and the twins in a go-cart. He is a young man still, when she is an old woman. Love is a mighty fine thing, dear Bob, but it is not the life of a man. There are a thousand other things for him to think of besides the red lips of Lucy, or the bright eyes of Eliza. There is business, there is friendship, there is society, there are taxes, there is ambition, and the manly desire to exercise the talents which are given us by heaven, and reap the prize of our desert. There are other books in a man's library besides Ovid; and after dawdling ever so long at a woman's knee, one day he gets up and is free. We have all been there: we have all had the fever: the strongest and smallest,

from Samson, Hercules, Rinaldo, downwards; but it burns out, and you get well.

Ladies who read this, and who know what a love I have for the whole sex, will not, I hope, cry out at the above observations, or be angry because I state that the ardor of love declines after a certain period. My dear Mrs. Hopkins, you would not have Hopkins to carry on the same absurd behavior which he exhibited when he was courting you? or in place of going to bed and to sleep comfortably, sitting up half the night to write to you bad verses? You would not have him racked with jealousy if you danced or spoke with any one else at a ball; or neglect all his friends, his business, his interest in life, in order to dangle at your feet? No, you are a sensible woman; you know that he must go to his counting-house, that he must receive and visit his friends, and that he must attend to his and your interest in life. You are no longer his goddess, his fairy, his peerless paragon, whose name he

shouted as *Don Quixote* did that of *Dulcinea*. You are Jane Hopkins, you are thirty years old, you have got a parcel of children, and Hop loves you and them with all his heart. He would be a helpless driveller and ninny were he to be honeymooning still, whereas he is a good honest fellow, respected on 'Change, liked by his friends, and famous for his port-wine.

Yes, Bob, the fever goes, but the wife does n't. Long after your passion is over, Mrs. Brown will be at your side, good soul, still; and it is for that, as I trust, long subsequent period of my worthy Bob's life, that I am anxious. How will she look when the fairy brilliancy of the honeymoon has faded into the light of common day?

You are of a jovial and social turn, and like to see the world, as why should you not? It contains a great number of kind and honest folks, from whom you may hear a thousand things wise and pleasant. A man ought to

like his neighbors, to mix with his neighbors, to be popular with his neighbors. It is a friendly heart that has plenty of friends. You can't be talking to Mrs. Brown forever and ever: you will be a couple of old geese if you do.

She ought then to be able to make your house pleasant to your friends. She ought to attract them to it by her grace, her good breeding, her good humor. Let it be said of her, "What an uncommonly nice woman Mrs. Brown is!" Let her be, if not a clever woman, an appreciator of cleverness in others, which, perhaps, clever folks like better. Above all, let her have a sense of humor, my dear Bob, for a woman without a laugh in her (like the late excellent Mrs. Brown) is the greatest bore in existence. Life without laughing is a dreary blank. A woman who cannot laugh is a wet blanket on the kindly nuptial couch. A good laugh is sunshine in a house. A quick intelligence, a brightening eye, a kind smile, a

cheerful spirit, — these, I hope, Mrs. Bob will bring to you in her *trousseau*, to be used afterwards for daily wear. Before all things, my dear Nephew, try and have a cheerful wife.

What, indeed, does not that word "cheerfulness" imply? It means a contented spirit, it means a pure heart, it means a kind and loving disposition; it means humility and charity; it means a generous appreciation of others, and a modest opinion of self. Stupid people, people who do not know how to laugh, are always pompous and self-conceited; that is, bigoted; that is, cruel; that is, ungentle, uncharitable, unchristian. Have a good, jolly, laughing, kind woman, then, for your partner, you who are yourself a kind and jolly fellow; and when you go to sleep, and when you wake, I pray there may be a smile under each of your honest nightcaps.

XVII

Out of Town—I.

I HAVE little news, my dear Bob, wherewith to entertain thee from this city, from which almost everybody has fled within the last week, and which lies in a state of torpor. I wonder what the newspapers find to talk about day after day, and how they come out every morning. But for a little distant noise of cannonading from the Danube and the Theiss, the whole world is silent, and London seems to have hauled down her flag, as her Majesty has done at Pimlico, and the queen of cities has gone out of town.

You, in pursuit of Miss Kicklebury, are probably by this time at Spa or Homburg. Watch her well, Bob, and see what her temper is like. See whether she flirts with the

foreigners much, examine how she looks of a morning (you will have a hundred opportunities of familiarities, and can drop in and out of a friend's apartments at a German watering-place as you never can hope to do here), examine her conduct with her little sisters, if they are of the party, whether she is good and playful with them, see whether she is cheerful and obedient to old Lady Kick (I acknowledge a hard task) — in fine, try her manners and temper, and see whether she wears them all day, or only puts on her smiles with her fresh bonnet, to come out on the parade at music time. I, meanwhile, remain behind, alone in our airy and great Babylon.

As an old soldier when he gets to his ground begins straightway *à se caser*, as the French say, makes the most of his circumstances, and himself as comfortable as he can, an old London man, if obliged to pass the dull season in town, accommodates himself to the time, and forages here and there in the deserted city,

and manages to make his own tent snug. A thousand means of comfort and amusement spring up, whereof a man has no idea of the existence, in the midst of the din and racket of the London season. I, for my part, am grown to that age, sir, when I like the quiet time the best: the gayety of the great London season is too strong and noisy for me; I like to talk to my beloved metropolis when she has done dancing at crowded balls, and squeezing at concerts, and chattering at conversaziones, and gorging at great dinners — when she is calm, contemplative, confidential, and at leisure.

Colonel Padmore of our Club being out of town, and too wise a man to send his favorite old cob to grass, I mounted him yesterday, and took a ride in Rotten Row, and in various parts of the city, where but ten days back all sorts of life, hilarity and hospitality, were going on. What a change it is now in the Park, from that scene which the modern Pepys, and that

ingenious youth who signs his immortal drawings with a D surmounted by a dickey-bird, depicted only a few weeks ago! Where are the thousands of carriages that crawled along the Serpentine shore, and which give an observant man a happy and wholesome sense of his own insignificance — for you shall be a man long upon the town, and pass five hundred equipages without knowing the owners of one of them? Where are the myriads of horsemen who trampled the Row? — the splendid dandies whose boots were shiny, whose chins were tufted, whose shirts were astounding, whose manners were frank and manly, whose brains were somewhat small? Where are the stout old capitalists and bishops on their cobs (the Bench, by the way, cuts an uncommonly good figure on horseback)? Where are the dear rideresses, above all? Where is she the gleaming of whose red neck-ribbon in the distance made your venerable uncle's heart beat, Bob? He sees her now prancing by, severe

and beautiful — a young Diana, with pure bright eyes! Where is Fanny, who wore the pretty gray hat and feather, and rode the pretty gray mare? Fanny changed her name last week without ever so much as sending me a piece of cake. The gay squadrons have disappeared; the ground no longer thrills with the thump of their countless hoofs. Watteau-like groups in shot silks no longer compose themselves under the green boughs of Kensington Gardens: the scarlet trumpeters have blown themselves away thence; you don't behold a score of horsemen in the course of an hour's ride; and Mrs. Catherine Highflyer, whom a fortnight since you never saw unaccompanied by some superb young Earl and *roué* of the fashion, had yesterday so little to do with her beautiful eyes that she absolutely tried to kill your humble servant with them as she cantered by me in at the barriers of the Row, and looked around firing Parthian shots behind her. But Padmore's cob did not trot,

nor did my blood run, any the quicker, Mr. Bob; man and beast are grown too old and steady to be put out of our pace by any Mrs. Highflyer of them all; and though I hope, if I live to be a hundred, never to be unmoved by the sight of a pretty girl, it is not thy kind of beauty, O ogling and vain Delilah, that can set me cantering after thee.

By the way, one of the benefits I find in the dull season is at my own lodgings. When I ring the bell now, that uncommonly pretty young woman, the landlady's daughter, condescends to come in and superintend my comfort, and whisk about amongst the books and tea-things, and wait upon me in general: whereas in the full season, when young Lord Claude Lollypop is here attending to his arduous duties in Parliament, and occupying his accustomed lodgings on the second floor, the deuce a bit will Miss Flora ever deign to bring a message or a letter to old Mr. Brown on the first, but sends me in Muggins, my old servant,

whose ugly face I have known any time these thirty years, or the blowsy maid-of-all-work with her sandy hair in papers.

Again, at the Club, how many privileges does a man lingering in London enjoy, from which he is precluded in the full season? Every man in every Club has three or four special aversions — men who somehow annoy him, as I have no doubt but that you and I, Bob, are hated by some particular man, and for that excellent reason for which the poet disliked Dr. Fell — the appearance of old Banquo, in the same place, in the same arm-chair, reading the newspaper day after day and evening after evening; of Mr. Plodder threading among the coffee-room tables and taking note of every man's dinner; of old General Hawkshaw, who makes that constant noise in the Club, sneezing, coughing, and blowing his nose — all these men, by their various defects or qualities, have driven me half mad at times, and I have thought to my-

self, Oh, that I could go to the Club without seeing Banquo — Oh, that Plodder would not come and inspect my mutton-chop — Oh, that fate would remove Hawkshaw and his pocket-handkerchief forever out of my sight and hearing! Well, August arrives, and one's three men of the sea are off one's shoulders. Mr. and Mrs. Banquo are at Leamington, the paper says; Mr. Plodder is gone to Paris to inspect the dinners at the "Trois Frères;" and Hawkshaw is coughing away at Brighton, where the sad sea waves murmur before him. The Club is your own. How pleasant it is! You can get the *Globe* and *Standard* now without a struggle; you may see all the Sunday papers; when you dine it is not like dining in a street dinned by the tramp of waiters perpetually passing with clanking dishes of various odors, and jostled by young men who look scowlingly down on you at dinner as they pass with creaking boots. They are all gone — you sit in a vast and agreeable apartment with twenty

large servants at your orders — if you were a Duke with a thousand pounds a day you could n't be better served or lodged. Those men, having nothing else to do, are anxious to prevent your desires and make you happy — the butler bustles about with your pint of wine — if you order a dish the *chef* himself will probably cook it; what mortal can ask more?

I once read in a book purporting to give descriptions of London, and life and manners, an account of a family in the lower ranks of genteel life, who shut up the front windows of their house, and lived in the back rooms, from which they only issued for fresh air surreptitiously at midnight, so that their friends might suppose that they were out of town. I suppose that there is some foundation for this legend. I suppose that some people *are* actually afraid to be seen in London, when the persons who form their society have quitted the metropolis: and that Mr. and Mrs. Higgs being left at home at Islington, when Mr. and Mrs. Biggs,

their next-door neighbors, have departed for Margate or Gravesend, feel pangs of shame at their own poverty, and envy at their friends' better fortune. I have seen many men and cities, my dear Bob, and noted their manners: and for servility I will back a free-born Englishman of the respectable classes against any man of any nation in the world. In the competition for social rank between Higgs and Biggs, think what a strange standard of superiority is set up! — a shilling steamer to Gravesend, and a few shrimps more or less on one part or the other, settle the claim. Perhaps in what is called high life, there are disputes as paltry, aims as mean, and distinctions as absurd: but my business is with this present folly of being ashamed to be in London. Ashamed, sir! I like being in London at this time, and have so much to say regarding the pleasures of the place in the dead season, that I hope to write you another letter regarding it next week.

XVIII

Out of Town — ii.

CAREERING during the season from one party to another, from one great dinner of twenty covers to another of eighteen guests; from Lady Hustlebury's rout to Mrs. Packingham's soirée — friendship, to a man about town, becomes impossible from February to August: it is only his acquaintances he can cultivate during those six months of turmoil.

In the last fortnight, one has had leisure to recur to more tender emotions; in other words, as nobody has asked me to dinner, I have been about seeking dinners from my old friends. And very glad are they to see you: very kindly and hospitable are they disposed to be, very pleasant are those little calm *réunions* in the quiet summer evenings, when the beloved

friend of your youth and you sip a bottle of claret together leisurely without candles, and ascend to the drawing-room where the friend of your youth's wife sits blandly presiding over the teapot. What matters that it is the metal teapot, the silver utensils being packed off to the banker's? What matters that the hangings are down, and the lustre in a brown-hollands bag? Intimacy increases by this artless confidence — you are admitted to a family *en déshabille*. In an honest man's house, the wine is never sent to the banker's; he can always go to the cellar for that. And so we drink and prattle in quiet — about the past season, about our sons at college, and what not! We become intimate again, because Fate, which has long separated us, throws us once more together. I say the dull season is a kind season: gentle and amiable, friendly and full of quiet enjoyment.

Among these pleasant little meetings, for which the present season has given time and

opportunity, I shall mention one, sir, which took place last Wednesday, and which during the very dinner itself I vowed I would describe, if the venerable *Mr. Punch* would grant me leave and space, in the columns of a journal which has for its object the promotion of mirth and good-will.

In the year eighteen hundred and something, sir, there lived at a villa, at a short distance from London, a certain gentleman and lady who had many acquaintances and friends, among whom was your humble servant. For to become acquainted with this young woman was to be her friend, so friendly was she, so kind, so gentle, so full of natural genius, and graceful feminine accomplishment. Whatever she did, she did charmingly; her life was decorated with a hundred pretty gifts, with which, as one would fancy, kind fairies had endowed her cradle; music and pictures seemed to flow naturally out of her hand, as she laid it on the piano or the drawing-board. She sang

exquisitely, and with a full heart, and as if she could n't help it any more than a bird. I have an image of this fair creature before me now, a calm, sunshiny evening, a green lawn flaring with roses and geraniums, and a half-dozen gentlemen sauntering thereon in a state of great contentment, or gathered under the veranda, by the open French window: near by she sits singing at the piano. She is in a pink dress: she has *gigot* sleeves; a little child in a prodigious sash is playing about at her mother's knee. She sings song after song: the sun goes down behind the black fir-trees that belt the lawn, and Missy in the blue sash vanishes to the nursery: the room darkens in the twilight; the stars appear in the heaven — and the tips of the cigars glow in the balcony; she sings song after song, in accents soft and low, tender and melodious — we are never tired of hearing her. Indeed, Bob, I can hear her still — the stars of those calm nights still shine in my memory, and I have been humming one of

her tunes with my pen in my mouth, to the surprise of Mr. Dodder, who is writing on the opposite side of the table, and wondering at the lackadaisical expression which pervades my venerable mug.

You will naturally argue from the above pathetic passage that I was greatly smitten by Mrs. Nightingale (as we will call this lady, if you will permit me). You are right, sir. For what is an amiable woman made, but that we should fall in love with her? I do not mean to say that you are to lose your sleep, or give up your dinner, or make yourself unhappy in her absence; but when the sun shines (and it is not too hot) I like to bask in it: when the bird sings, to listen: and to admire that which is admirable with an honest and hearty enjoyment. There were a half-dozen men at the period of which I speak who wore Mrs. Nightingale's colors, and we used to be invited down from London of a Saturday and Sunday, to Thornwood, by the hospitable host and hostess

there, and it seemed like going back to school, when we came away by the coach of a Monday morning: we talked of her all the way back to London, to separate upon our various callings when we got into the smoky city. Salvator Rodgers, the painter, went to his easel; Woodward, the barrister, to his chambers; Piper, the doctor, to his patient (for he then had only one), and so forth. Fate called us each to his business, and has sent us upon many a distant errand since that day. But from that day to this, whenever we meet, the remembrance of the holidays at Thornwood has been always a bond of union between us: and we have always had Mrs. Nightingale's colors put away amongst the cherished relics of old times.

N. was a West India merchant, and his property went to the bad. He died at Jamaica. Thornwood was let to other people, who knew us not. The widow with a small jointure retired, and educated her daughter abroad. We

had not heard of her for years and years, nor until she came to town about a legacy a few weeks since.

In those years and years what changes have taken place! Sir Salvator Rodgers is a Member of the Royal Academy; Woodward, the barrister, has made a fortune at the Bar; and in seeing Dr. Piper in his barouche, as he rolls about Belgravia and May Fair, you at once know what a man of importance he has become.

On last Monday week, sir, I received a letter in a delicate female handwriting, with which I was not acquainted, and which Miss Flora, the landlady's daughter, condescended to bring me, saying that it had been left at the door by two ladies in a brougham.

"—Why did you not let them come upstairs?" said I in a rage, after reading the note.

"We don't know what sort of people goes about in broughams," said Miss Flora, with a

toss of her head; "we don't want no ladies in *our* house." And she flung her impertinence out of the room.

The note was signed Frances Nightingale, — whereas *our* Nightingale's name was Louisa. But this Frances was no other than the little thing in the large blue sash, whom we remembered at Thornwood ever so many years ago. The writer declared that she recollected me quite well, that her mamma was most anxious to see an old friend, and that they had apartments at No. 166 Clarges Street, Piccadilly, whither I hastened off to pay my respects to Mrs. Nightingale.

When I entered the room, a tall and beautiful young woman with blue eyes, and a serene and majestic air, came up to shake hands with me: and I beheld in her, without in the least recognizing, the little Fanny of the blue sash. Mamma came out of the adjoining apartment presently, We had not met since — since all sorts of events had occurred — her voice was

not a little agitated. Here was that fair creature whom we had admired so. Sir, I shall not say whether she was altered or not. The tones of her voice were as sweet and kind as ever; — and we talked about Miss Fanny as a subject in common between us, and I admired the growth and beauty of the young lady, though I did not mind telling her to her face (at which to be sure the girl was delighted) that she never in my eyes would be half so pretty as her mother.

Well, sir, upon this day arrangements were made for the dinner which took place on Wednesday last, and to the remembrance of which I determined to consecrate this present page.

It so happened that everybody was in town of the old set of whom I have made mention, and everybody was disengaged. Sir Salvator Rodgers (who has become such a swell since he was knighted and got the cordon of the order of the George and Blue Boar of Russia,

that we like to laugh at him a little) made his appearance at eight o'clock, and was perfectly natural and affable. Woodward, the lawyer, forgot his abominable law and his money about which he is always thinking: and finally, Dr. Piper, of whom we despaired because his wife is mortally jealous of every lady whom he attends, and will hardly let him dine out of her sight, had pleaded Lady Rackstraw's situation as a reason for not going down to Wimbledon Common till night — and so we six had a meeting.

The door was opened to us by a maid, who looked us hard in the face as we went upstairs, and who was no other than little Fanny's nurse in former days, come like us to visit her old mistress. We all knew her except Woodward, the lawyer, and all shook hands with her except him. Constant study had driven her out of the lawyer's memory. I don't think he ever cared for Mrs. Nightingale as much as the rest of us did, or indeed

that it is in the nature of that learned man to care for any but one learned person.

And what do you think, sir, this dear and faithful widow had done to make us welcome? She remembered the dishes that we used to like ever so long ago, and she had every man's favorite dish for him. Rodgers used to have a passion for herrings — there they were; the lawyer, who has an enormous appetite, which he gratifies at other people's expense, had a shoulder of mutton and onion sauce, which the lean and hungry man devoured almost entirely: mine did not come till the second course — it was baked plum-pudding — I was affected when I saw it, sir — I choked almost when I ate it. Piper made a beautiful little speech, and made an ice compound, for which he was famous, and we drank it just as we used to drink it in old times, and to the health of the widow.

How should we have had this dinner, how could we all have assembled together again, if

everybody had not been out of town, and everybody had not been disengaged? Just for one evening, the scattered members of an old circle of friendship returned and met round the old table again, — round this little green island we moor for the night at least, — to-morrow we part company, and each man for himself sails over the *ingens æquor*.

Since I wrote the above, I find that everybody really *is* gone away. The widow left town on Friday. I have been on my round just now, and have been met at every step by closed shutters and the faces of unfamiliar charwomen. No. 9 is gone to Malvern. No. 37, 15, 25, 48, and 36A are gone to Scotland. The solitude of the Club begins to be unbearable, and I found Muggins this morning preparing a mysterious apparatus of travelling boot-trees, and dusting the portmanteaus.

If you are not getting on well with the Kickleburys at Homburg I recommend you to go to Spa. Mrs. Nightingale is going thither,

and will be at the Hôtel d'Orange; where you may use my name and present yourself to her; and I may hint to you in confidence that Miss Fanny will have a very pretty little fortune.

THE END.

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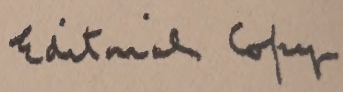

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